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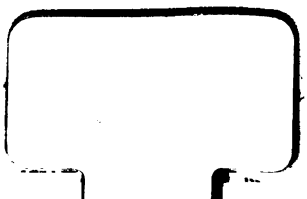

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*Edinburgh, 2d October*, 1837.

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# MEMOIRS

OF THE

# LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

## CHAPTER I.

AUTUMN AT ABBOTSFORD—SCOTT'S HOSPITALITY—VISIT OF SIR HUMPHRY DAVY—HENRY MACKENZIE—DR WOLLASTON AND WILLIAM STEWART ROSE—COURSING ON NEWARK HILL—SALMON-FISHING—THE FESTIVAL AT BOLDSIDE—THE ABBOTSFORD HUNT—THE KIRN, ETC.

1820.

ABOUT the middle of August (1820), my wife and I went to Abbotsford; and we remained there for several weeks, during which I became familiarized to Sir Walter Scott's mode of existence in the country. It was necessary to observe it, day after day, for a considerable period, before one could believe that such was, during nearly half the year, the routine of life with the most productive author of his age. The humblest person who stayed merely for a short visit, must have departed with the impression, that what he witnessed was an occasional variety; that Scott's courtesy prompted him to break in upon his habits when he had a stranger to amuse; but

that it was physically impossible, that the man who was writing the Waverley romances at the rate of nearly twelve volumes in the year, could continue, week after week, and month after month, to devote all but a hardly perceptible fraction of his mornings to out of doors' occupations, and the whole of his evenings to the entertainment of a constantly varying circle of guests.

The hospitality of his afternoons must alone have been enough to exhaust the energies of almost any man; for his visiters did not mean, like those of country houses in general, to enjoy the landlord's good cheer and amuse each other; but the far greater proportion arrived from a distance, for the sole sake of the Poet and Novelist himself, whose person they had never before seen, and whose voice they might never again have any opportunity of hearing. No other villa in Europe was ever resorted to from the same motives, and to any thing like the same extent, except Ferney; and Voltaire never dreamt of being visible to his *hunters*, except for a brief space of the day; few of them even dined with him, and none of them seem to have slept under his roof. Scott's establishment, on the contrary, resembled in every particular that of the affluent idler, who, because he has inherited, or would fain transmit, political influence in some province, keeps open house—receives as many as he has room for, and sees their apartments occupied, as soon as they vacate them, by another troop of the same description. Even on gentlemen guiltless of inkshed, the exercise of hospitality upon this sort of scale is found to impose a heavy tax; few of them, nowadays, think of maintaining it for any large portion of the year: very few indeed below the highest rank of the nobility—in whose case there is usually a staff of led-captains, led-chaplains, servile dandies, and semi-professional talkers

and jokers from London, to take the chief part of the burden. Now, Scott had often in his mouth the pithy verses—

> "Conversation is but carving,—
> Give no more to every guest,
> Than he's able to digest;
> Give him always of the prime,
> And but a little at a time;
> Carve to all but just enough,
> Let them neither starve nor stuff;
> *And that you may have your due,*
> *Let your neighbours carve for you*:"—

and he, in his own familiar circle always, and in other circles where it was possible, furnished a happy exemplification of these rules and regulations of the Dean of St Patrick's. But the same sense and benevolence which dictated adhesion to them among his old friends and acquaintance, rendered it necessary to break them, when he was receiving strangers of the class I have described above at Abbotsford: he felt that their coming was the best homage they could pay to his celebrity, and that it would have been as uncourteous in him not to give them their fill of his talk, as it would be in your every-day lord of manors to make his casual guests welcome indeed to his venison, but keep his grouse-shooting for his immediate allies and dependants.

Every now and then he received some stranger who was not indisposed to take his part in the *carving;* and how good-humouredly he surrendered the lion's share to any one that seemed to covet it—with what perfect placidity he submitted to be bored even by bores of the first water, must have excited the admiration of many besides the daily observers of his proceedings. I have heard a spruce Senior Wrangler lecture him for half an evening on the niceties of the Greek epigram;

I have heard the poorest of all parliamentary blunderers try to detail to him the *pros* and *cons* of what he called the *Truck System;* and in either case the same bland eye watched the lips of the tormentor. But, with such ludicrous exceptions, Scott was the one object of the Abbotsford pilgrims; and evening followed evening only to show him exerting, for their amusement, more of animal spirits, to say nothing of intellectual vigour, than would have been considered by any other man in the company as sufficient for the whole expenditure of a week's existence. Yet this was not the chief marvel; he talked of things that interested himself, because he knew that by doing so he should give most pleasure to his guests; but how vast was the range of subjects on which he could talk with unaffected zeal; and with what admirable delicacy of instinctive politeness did he select his topic according to the peculiar history, study, pursuits or social habits of the stranger! How beautifully he varied his style of letter-writing, according to the character and situation of his multifarious correspondents, the reader has already been enabled to judge; but to carry the same system into practice *at sight*—to manage utter strangers, of many and widely different classes, in the same fashion, and with the same effect—called for a quickness of observation and fertility of resource such as no description can convey the slightest notion of to those who never witnessed the thing for themselves. And all this was done without approach to the unmanly trickery of what is called *catching the tone* of the person one converses with. Scott took the subject on which he thought such a man or woman would like best to hear him speak—but not to handle it in their way, or in any way but what was completely, and most simply his own;—not to flatter them by embellishing, with the illustration of his genius, the views and

opinions which they were supposed to entertain,—but to let his genius play out its own variations, for his own delight and theirs, as freely and easily, and with as endless a multiplicity of delicious novelties, as ever the magic of Beethoven or Mozart could fling over the few primitive notes of a village air.

It is the custom in some, perhaps in many country houses, to keep a register of the guests, and I have often regretted that nothing of the sort was ever attempted at Abbotsford. It would have been a curious record—especially if so contrived—(as I have seen done)—that the names of each day should, by their arrangement on the page, indicate the exact order in which the company sat at dinner. It would hardly, I believe, be too much to affirm, that Sir Walter Scott entertained, under his roof, in the course of the seven or eight brilliant seasons when his prosperity was at its height, as many persons of distinction in rank, in politics, in art, in literature, and in science, as the most princely nobleman of his age ever did in the like space of time.—I turned over, since I wrote the preceding sentence, Mr Lodge's compendium of the British Peerage, and on summing up the titles which suggested *to myself* some reminiscence of this kind, I found them nearly as one out of six.—I fancy it is not beyond the mark to add, that of the eminent foreigners who visited our island within this period, a moiety crossed the Channel mainly in consequence of the interest with which his writings had invested Scotland—and that the hope of beholding the man under his own roof was the crowning motive with half that moiety. As for countrymen of his own, like him ennobled, in the higher sense of that word, by the display of their intellectual energies, if any one such contemporary can be pointed out as having crossed the Tweed, and yet not spent a day at Abbotsford, I shall be surprised.

It is needless to add, that Sir Walter was familiarly known, long before the days I am speaking of, to almost all the nobility and higher gentry of Scotland; and consequently, that there seldom wanted a fair proportion of them to assist him in doing the honours of his country. It is still more superfluous to say so respecting the heads of his own profession at Edinburgh: *Sibi et amicis*—Abbotsford was their villa whenever they pleased to resort to it, and few of them were ever absent from it long. He lived meanwhile in a constant interchange of easy visits with the gentlemen's families of Teviotdale and the Forest; so that, mixed up with his superfine admirers of the Mayfair breed, his staring worshippers from foreign parts, and his quick-witted coevals of the Parliament-House—there was found generally some hearty homespun laird, with his dame—the young laird—a bashful bumpkin, perhaps, whose ideas did not soar beyond his gun and pointer—or perhaps a little pseudo-dandy, for whom the Kelso race-course and the Jedburgh ball were "Life," and "the World;" and not forgetting a brace of "Miss Rawbones," in whom, as their mamma prognosticated, some of Sir Walter's young Waverleys or Osbaldistones might peradventure discover a Flora MacIvor or a Die Vernon. To complete the *olla podrida*, we must remember that no old acquaintance, or family connexions, however remote their actual station or style of manners from his own, were forgotten or lost sight of. He had some, even near relations who, except when they visited him, rarely, if ever, found admittance to what the haughty dialect of the upper world is pleased to designate exclusively as *society*. These were welcome guests, let who might be under that roof; and it was the same with many a worthy citizen of Edinburgh, habitually moving in the obscurest of circles, who had been in the same class with Scott at the High School, or his

fellow-apprentice when he was proud of earning threepence a-page by the use of his pen. To dwell on nothing else, it was surely a beautiful perfection of real universal humanity and politeness, that could enable this great and good man to blend guests so multifarious in one group, and contrive to make them all equally happy with him, with themselves, and with each other.

I remember saying to William Allan one morning as the whole party mustered before the porch after breakfast, "a faithful sketch of what you at this moment see would be more interesting a hundred years hence, than the grandest so-called historical picture that you will ever exhibit in Somerset-House;" and my friend agreed with me so cordially, that I often wondered afterwards he had not attempted to realize the suggestion. The subject ought, however, to have been treated conjointly by him (or Wilkie) and Edwin Landseer. It was a clear, bright, September morning, with a sharpness in the air that doubled the animating influence of the sunshine, and all was in readiness for a grand coursing match on Newark Hill. The only guest who had chalked out other sport for himself was the stanchest of anglers, Mr Rose; but he, too, was there on his *shelty*, armed with his salmon-rod and landing-net, and attended by his humorous squire Hinves, and Charlie Purdie, a brother of Tom, in those days the most celebrated fisherman of the district. This little group of Waltonians, bound for Lord Somerville's preserve, remained lounging about to witness the start of the main cavalcade. Sir Walter, mounted on Sibyl, was marshalling the order of procession with a huge hunting-whip; and among a dozen frolicsome youths and maidens, who seemed disposed to laugh at all discipline, appeared, each on horseback, each as eager as the youngest sportsman in the troop, Sir Humphry Davy, Dr Wollaston, and the patriarch of Scottish belles-lettres, Henry Mac-

kenzie. The Man of Feeling, however, was persuaded with some difficulty to resign his steed for the present to his faithful negro follower, and to join Lady Scott in the sociable, until we should reach the ground of our *battue*. Laidlaw, on a long-tailed wiry Highlander, yclept *Hoddin Grey*, which carried him nimbly and stoutly, although his feet almost touched the ground as he sat, was the adjutant. But the most picturesque figure was the illustrious inventor of the safety-lamp. He had come for his favourite sport of angling, and had been practising it successfully with Rose, his travelling companion, for two or three days preceding this, but he had not prepared for coursing fields, or had left Charlie Purdie's troop for Sir Walter's on a sudden thought, and his fisherman's costume—a brown hat with flexible brims, surrounded with line upon line of catgut, and innumerable fly-hooks—jack-boots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon, made a fine contrast with the smart jackets, white-cord breeches, and well polished jockey-boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him. Dr Wollaston was in black, and with his noble serene dignity of countenance, might have passed for a sporting archbishop. Mr Mackenzie, at this time in the 76th year of his age, with a white hat turned up with green, green spectacles, green jacket, and long brown leathern gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy, wore a dog-whistle round his neck, and had all over the air of as resolute a devotee as the gay captain of Huntly Burn. Tom Purdie and his subalterns had preceded us by a few hours with all the greyhounds that could be collected at Abbotsford, Darnick, and Melrose; but the giant Maida had remained as his master's orderly, and now gambolled about Sibyl Grey, barking for mere joy like a spaniel puppy.

The order of march had been all settled, and the sociable

was just getting under weigh, when *the Lady Anne* broke from the line, screaming with laughter, and exclaimed, "Papa, papa, I knew you could never think of going without your pet." Scott looked round, and I rather think there was a blush as well as a smile upon his face, when he perceived a little black pig frisking about his pony, and evidently a self-elected addition to the party of the day. He tried to look stern, and cracked his whip at the creature, but was in a moment obliged to join in the general cheers. Poor piggy soon found a strap round its neck, and was dragged into the background:—Scott, watching the retreat, repeated with mock pathos the first verse of an old pastoral song—

"What will I do gin my hoggie* die?
My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
My only beast, I had nae mae,
And wow! but I was vogie!"

—the cheers were redoubled—and the squadron moved on.

This pig had taken, nobody could tell how, a most sentimental attachment to Scott, and was constantly urging its pretensions to be admitted a regular member of his *tail* along with the greyhounds and terriers; but, indeed, I remember him suffering another summer under the same sort of pertinacity on the part of an affectionate hen. I leave the explanation for philosophers—but such were the facts. I have too much respect for the vulgarly calumniated donkey to name him in the same category of pets with the pig and the hen; but a year or two af-

* *Hog* signifies in the Scotch dialect a young sheep that has never been shorn. Hence, no doubt, the name of the Poet of Ettrick—derived from a long line of shepherds. Mr Charles Lamb, however, in one of his sonnets, suggests this pretty origin of *his* "Family Name:"—

"Perhaps some shepherd on Lincolnian plains,
In manners guileless as his own sweet flocks,
Received it first amid the merry mocks,
And arch allusions of his fellow swains."

ter this time, my wife used to drive a couple of these animals in a little garden chair, and whenever her father appeared at the door of our cottage, we were sure to see Hannah More and Lady Morgan (as Anne Scott had wickedly christened them) trotting from their pasture to lay their noses over the paling, and, as Washington Irving says of the old whitehaired hedger with the Parisian snuff-box, "to have a pleasant crack wi' the laird."

But to return to our *chasse*. On reaching Newark Castle, we found Lady Scott, her eldest daughter, and the venerable Mackenzie, all busily engaged in unpacking a basket that had been placed in their carriage, and arranging the luncheon it contained upon the mossy rocks overhanging the bed of the Yarrow. When such of the company as chose had partaken of this refection, the Man of Feeling resumed his pony, and all ascended the mountain, duly marshalled at proper distances, so as to beat in a broad line over the heather, Sir Walter directing the movement from the right wing—towards Blackandro. Davy, next to whom I chanced to be riding, laid his whip about the fern like an experienced hand, but cracked many a joke, too, upon his own jack-boots, and surveying the long eager battalion of bush-rangers, exclaimed "Good heavens! is it thus that I visit the scenery of the Lay of the Last Minstrel?" He then kept muttering to himself, as his glowing eye—(the finest and brightest that I ever saw)—ran over the landscape, some of those beautiful lines from the *Conclusion* of the Lay—

——"But still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath,
When throstles sung in Hareheadshaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged harper's soul awoke," &c.

Mackenzie, spectacled though he was, saw the first sitting hare, gave the word to slip the dogs, and spurred after them like a boy. All the seniors, indeed, did well as long as the course was upwards, but when puss took down the declivity, they halted and breathed themselves upon the knoll—cheering gaily, however, the young people, who dashed at full speed past and below them. Coursing on such a mountain is not like the same sport over a set of fine English pastures. There were gulfs to be avoided, and bogs enough to be threaded —many a stiff nag stuck fast—many a bold rider measured his length among the peat-hags—and another stranger to the ground besides Davy plunged neck-deep into a treacherous well-head, which, till they were floundering in it, had borne all the appearance of a piece of delicate green turf. When Sir Humphry emerged from his involuntary bath, his habiliments garnished with mud, slime, and mangled water-cresses, Sir Walter received him with a triumphant *encore!* But the philosopher had his revenge, for joining soon afterwards in a brisk gallop, Scott put Sibyl Grey to a leap beyond her prowess, and lay humbled in the ditch, while Davy, who was better mounted, cleared it and him at a bound. Happily there was little damage done—but no one was sorry that the sociable had been detained at the foot of the hill.

I have seen Sir Humphry in many places, and in company of many different descriptions; but never to such advantage as at Abbotsford. His host and he delighted in each other, and the modesty of their mutual admiration was a memorable spectacle. Davy was by nature a poet—and Scott, though any thing but a philosopher in the modern sense of that term, might, I think it very likely, have pursued the study of physical science with zeal and success, had he happened to fall in with such an instructor as Sir Humphry would have been to

him, in his early life. Each strove to make the other talk —and they did so in turn more charmingly than I ever heard either on any other occasion whatsoever. Scott in his romantic narratives touched a deeper chord of feeling than usual, when he had such a listener as Davy: and Davy, when induced to open his views upon any question of scientific interest in Scott's presence, did so with a degree of clear energetic eloquence, and with a flow of imagery and illustration, of which neither his habitual tone of tabletalk (least of all in London), nor any of his prose writings (except, indeed, the posthumous Consolations of Travel) could suggest an adequate notion. I say his prose writings—for who that has read his sublime quatrains on the doctrine of Spinoza can doubt that he might have united, if he had pleased, in some great didactic poem, the vigorous ratiocination of Dryden and the moral majesty of Wordsworth? I remember William Laidlaw whispering to me, one night, when their "rapt talk" had kept the circle round the fire until long after the usual bedtime of Abbotsford—"Gude preserve us! this is a very superior occasion! Eh, sirs!" he added, cocking his eye like a bird, "I wonder if Shakspeare and Bacon ever met to screw ilk other up?"

Since I have touched on the subject of Sir Walter's autumnal diversions in these his later years, I may as well notice here two annual festivals, when sport was made his pretext for assembling his rural neighbours about him—days eagerly anticipated, and fondly remembered by many. One was a solemn bout of salmon-fishing for the neighbouring gentry and their families, instituted originally, I believe, by Lord Somerville, but now, in his absence, conducted and presided over by the Sheriff. Charles Purdie, already mentioned, had charge (partly as lessee) of the salmon fisheries for three or four miles of the Tweed, including all the water attached to

the lands of Abbotsford, Gala, and Allwyn; and this festival had been established with a view, besides other considerations, of recompensing him for the attention he always bestowed on any of the lairds or their visiters that chose to fish, either from the banks or the boat, within his jurisdiction. His selection of the day, and other precautions, generally secured an abundance of sport for the great anniversary; and then the whole party assembled to regale on the newly caught prey, boiled, grilled, and roasted in every variety of preparation, beneath a grand old ash, adjoining Charlie's cottage at Boldside, on the northern margin of the Tweed, about a mile above Abbotsford. This banquet took place earlier in the day or later, according to circumstances; but it often lasted till the harvest moon shone on the lovely scene and its revellers. These formed groups that would have done no discredit to Watteau—and a still better hand has painted the background in the Introduction to the Monastery:—"On the opposite bank of the Tweed might be seen the remains of ancient enclosures, surrounded by sycamores and ash-trees of considerable size. These had once formed the crofts or arable ground of a village, now reduced to a single hut, the abode of a fisherman, who also manages a ferry. The cottages, even the church which once existed there, have sunk into vestiges hardly to be traced without visiting the spot, the inhabitants having gradually withdrawn to the more prosperous town of Galashiels, which has risen into consideration, within two miles of their neighbourhood. Superstitious eld, however, has tenanted the deserted grove with aërial beings, to supply the want of the mortal tenants who have deserted it. The ruined and abandoned churchyard of Boldside has been long believed to be haunted by the Fairies, and the deep broad current of the Tweed, wheeling in moonlight round the

foot of the steep bank, with the number of trees originally planted for shelter round the fields of the cottagers, but now presenting the effect of scattered and detached groves, fill up the idea which one would form in imagination for a scene that Oberon and Queen Mab might love to revel in. There are evenings when the spectator might believe, with Father Chaucer, that the

> ——'Queen of Faëry,
> With harp, and pipe, and symphony,
> Were dwelling in the place.'"——

Sometimes the evening closed with a "burning of the water;" and then the Sheriff, though now not so agile as when he practised that rough sport in the early times of Ashestiel, was sure to be one of the party in the boat,—held a torch, or perhaps took the helm,—and seemed to enjoy the whole thing as heartily as the youngest of his company—

> "'Tis blithe along the midnight tide,
> With stalwart arm the boat to guide—
> On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
> And heedful plunge the barbed spear;
> Rock, wood, and scaur, emerging bright,
> Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
> And from the bank our band appears
> Like Genii armed with fiery spears."

The other "superior occasion" came later in the season; the 28th of October, the birthday of Sir Walter's eldest son, was, I think, that usually selected for *the Abbotsford Hunt*. This was a coursing-field on a large scale, including, with as many of the young gentry as pleased to attend, all Scott's personal favourites among the yeomen and farmers of the surrounding country. The Sheriff always took the field, but latterly devolved the command upon his good friend Mr John Usher, the ex-laird of Toftfield; and he could not have had a more skilful or a better-humoured lieutenant. The hunt

took place either on the moors above the Cauld-Shiels Loch, or over some of the hills on the estate of Gala, and we had commonly, ere we returned, hares enough to supply the wife of every farmer that attended with *soup* for a week following. The whole then dined at Abbotsford, the Sheriff in the chair, Adam Ferguson croupier, and Dominie Thomson, of course, chaplain. George, by the way, was himself an eager partaker in the preliminary sport; and now he would favour us with a grace, in Burns's phrase, "as long as my arm," beginning with thanks to the Almighty, who had given man dominion over the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, and expatiating on this text with so luculent a commentary, that Scott, who had been fumbling with his spoon long before he reached his Amen, could not help exclaiming as he sat down, "Well done, Mr George, I think we've had every thing but the view holla!" The company, whose onset had been thus deferred, were seldom, I think, under thirty in number, and sometimes they exceeded forty. The feast was such as suited the occasion—a baron of beef, roasted, at the foot of the table, a salted round at the head, while tureens of hare-soup, hotchpotch, and cockeyleekie extended down the centre, and such light articles as geese, turkeys, entire sucking pigs, a singed sheep's head, and the unfailing haggis, were set forth by way of side-dishes. Blackcock and moorfowl, bushels of snipe, *black puddings*, *white puddings*, and pyramids of pancakes, formed the second course. Ale was the favourite beverage during dinner, but there was plenty of port and sherry for those whose stomachs they suited. The quaighs of Glenlivet were filled brimful, and tossed off as if they held water. The wine decanters made a few rounds of the table, but the hints for hot punch and toddy soon became clamorous. Two or three bowls were introduced, and placed under the su-

pervision of experienced manufacturers—one of these being usually the Ettrick Shepherd,—and then the business of the evening commenced in good earnest. The faces shone and glowed like those at Camacho's wedding: the chairman told his richest stories of old rural life, Lowland or Highland; Ferguson and humbler heroes fought their peninsular battles o'er again; the stalwart Dandie Dinmonts lugged out their last winter's snow-storm, the parish scandal, perhaps, or the dexterous bargain of the Northumberland *tryste;* and every man was knocked down for the song that he sung best, or took most pleasure in singing. Sheriff-substitute Shortreed—(a cheerful hearty little man, with a sparkling eye and a most infectious laugh)—gave us *Dick o' the Cow*, or, *Now Liddesdale has ridden a raid;* a weatherbeaten, stiff-bearded veteran, *Captain* Ormistoun, as he was called (though I doubt if his rank was recognised at the Horse Guards), had the primitive pastoral of *Cowdenknowes* in sweet perfection; Hogg produced *The Women folk*, or, *The Kye comes hame*, and, in spite of many grinding notes, contrived to make every body delighted, whether with the fun or the pathos of his ballad; the Melrose doctor sang in spirited style some of Moore's masterpieces; a couple of retired sailors joined in *Bould Admiral Duncan upon the high sea;*—and the gallant croupier crowned the last bowl with *Ale, good ale, thou art my darling!* Imagine some smart Parisian *savant*—some dreamy pedant of Halle or Heidelberg—a brace of stray young lords from Oxford or Cambridge, or perhaps their prim college tutors, planted here and there amidst these rustic wassailers—this being their first vision of the author of Marmion and Ivanhoe, and he appearing as heartily at home in the scene as if he had been a veritable *Dandie* himself—his face radiant, his laugh gay as childhood, his chorus always ready. And so it pro-

ceeded until some worthy, who had fifteen or twenty miles to ride home, began to insinuate that his wife and bairns would be getting sorely anxious about the fords, and the Dumples and Hoddins were at last heard neighing at the gate, and it was voted that the hour had come for *doch an dorrach*—the stirrup-cup—to wit, a bumper all round of the unmitigated *mountain dew.* How they all contrived to get home in safety Heaven only knows—but I never heard of any serious accident except upon one occasion, when James Hogg made a bet at starting that he would leap over his wall-eyed poney as she stood, and broke his nose in this experiment of "o'ervaulting ambition." One comely goodwife, far off among the hills, amused Sir Walter by telling him, the next time he passed her homestead after one of these jolly doings, what her husband's first words were when he alighted at his own door—"Ailie, my woman, I'm ready for my bed—and oh, lass (he gallantly added), I wish I could sleep for a towmont, for there's only ae thing in this warld worth living for, and that's the Abbotsford hunt!"

It may well be supposed that the President of the Boldside Festival and the Abbotsford Hunt, did not omit the good old custom of *the Kirn.* Every November before quitting the country for Edinburgh, he gave a *harvest-home,* on the most approved model of former days, to all the peasantry on his estate, their friends and kindred, and as many poor neighbours besides as his barn could hold. Here old and young danced from sunset to sunrise, John of Skye's bagpipe being relieved at intervals by the violin of some "Wandering Willie;"—and the laird and all his family were present during the early part of the evening, he and his wife to distribute the contents of the first tub of whisky-punch, and his young people to take their due share in the endless reels

and hornpipes of the earthen floor. As Mr Morritt has said of him as he appeared at Laird Nippey's kirn of earlier days, "to witness the cordiality of his reception might have unbent a misanthrope." He had his private joke for every old wife or "gausie carle," his arch compliment for the ear of every bonny lass, and his hand and his blessing for the head of every little *Eppie Daidle* from Abbotstown or Broomylees.

"The notable paradox," he says in one of the most charming of his essays, "that the residence of a proprietor upon his estate is of as little consequence as the bodily presence of a stockholder upon Exchange, has, we believe, been renounced. At least, as in the case of the Duchess of Suffolk's relationship to her own child, the vulgar continue to be of opinion that there is some difference in favour of the next hamlet and village, and even of the vicinage in general, when the squire spends his rents at the manor-house, instead of cutting a figure in France or Italy. A celebrated politician used to say he would willingly bring in one bill to make poaching felony, another to encourage the breed of foxes, and a third to revive the decayed amusements of cock-fighting and bull-baiting—that he would make, in short, any sacrifice to the humours and prejudices of the country gentlemen, in their most extravagant form, provided only he could prevail upon them to 'dwell in their own houses, be the patrons of their own tenantry, and the fathers of their own children.'"*

* Essay on Landscape Gardening, Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxi., p. 77.

## CHAPTER II.

PUBLICATION OF THE ABBOT—THE BLAIR-ADAM CLUB—KELSO —WALTONHALL, ETC.—BALLANTYNE'S NOVELIST'S LIBRARY —ACQUITTAL OF QUEEN CAROLINE—SERVICE OF THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—SCOTT ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH—THE CELTIC SOCIETY—LETTERS TO LORD MONTAGU—CORNET SCOTT—CHARLES SCOTT—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM, ETC.—KENILWORTH PUBLISHED.

1820–1821.

In the September of 1820, Longman, in conjunction with Constable, published *The Abbot*—the continuation, to a certain extent, of The Monastery, of which I barely mentioned the appearance under the preceding March. I had nothing of any consequence to add to the information which the subsequent Introduction affords us respecting the composition and fate of the former of these novels. It was considered as a failure—the first of the series on which any such sentence was pronounced; nor have I much to allege in favour of the White Lady of Avenel, generally criticised as the primary blot, or of Sir Percy Shafton, who was loudly, though not quite so generally, condemned. In either case, considered separately, he seems to have erred from dwelling (in the German taste) on materials that might have done very well for a rapid sketch. The phantom with whom we have leisure to become familiar is sure to fail—even the witch of Endor is contented with a momentary appearance and five syllables of the shade she evokes. And we may say the

same of any grotesque absurdity in human manners; Scott might have considered with advantage how lightly and briefly Shakspeare introduces *his* Euphuism—though actually the prevalent humour of the hour when he was writing. But perhaps these errors might have attracted little notice, had the novelist been successful in finding some reconciling medium capable of giving consistence and harmony to his naturally incongruous materials. "These," said one of his ablest critics, "are joined—but they refuse to blend: Nothing can be more poetical in conception, and sometimes in language, than the fiction of the White Maid of Avenel; but when this ethereal personage, who rides on the cloud which 'for Araby is bound'—who is

> 'Something between heaven and hell,
> Something that neither stood nor fell'—

whose existence is linked by an awful and mysterious destiny to the fortunes of a decaying family; when such a being as this descends to clownish pranks, and promotes a frivolous jest about a tailor's bodkin, the course of our sympathies is rudely arrested, and we feel as if the author had put upon us the old-fashioned pleasantry of selling a bargain."*

The beautiful natural scenery, and the sterling Scotch characters and manners introduced in the Monastery are, however, sufficient to redeem even these mistakes; and, indeed, I am inclined to believe that it will ultimately occupy a securer place than some romances enjoying hitherto a far higher reputation, in which he makes no use of *Scottish* materials.

Sir Walter himself thought well of *The Abbot* when he had finished it. When he sent me a complete copy, I found on a slip of paper at the beginning of volume

* Adolphus's Letters to Heber, p. 13.

first, these two lines from *Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress*—

> "Up he rose in a funk, lapped a toothful of brandy,
> And *to it* again!—any odds upon Sandy!"—

and whatever ground he had been supposed to lose in the Monastery, part at least of it was regained by this tale, and especially by its most graceful and pathetic portraiture of Mary Stuart. "The Castle of Lochleven," says the Chief-Commissioner Adam, "is seen at every turn from the northern side of Blair-Adam. This castle, renowned and attractive above all the others in my neighbourhood, became an object of much increased attention, and a theme of constant conversation, after the author of Waverley had, by his inimitable power of delineating character—by his creative poetic fancy in representing scenes of varied interest—and by the splendour of his romantic descriptions, infused a more diversified and a deeper tone of feeling into the history of Queen Mary's captivity and escape."

I have introduced this quotation from a little book privately printed for the amiable Judge's own family and familiar friends, because Sir Walter owned to myself at the time, that the idea of *The Abbot* had arisen in his mind during a visit to Blair-Adam. In the pages of the tale itself, indeed, the beautiful localities of that estate are distinctly mentioned, with an allusion to the virtues and manners that adorn its mansion, such as must have been intended to satisfy the possessor (if he could have had any doubts on the subject) as to the authorship of those novels.

The Right Honourable William Adam—(who must pardon my mentioning him here as the only man I ever knew that rivalled Sir Walter Scott in uniform graciousness of *bonhommie* and gentleness of humour)—was ap-

pointed, in 1815, to the Presidency of the Court for Jury Trial in Civil Cases, then instituted in Scotland, and he thenceforth spent a great part of his time at his paternal seat in Kinross-shire. Here, about midsummer 1816, he received a visit from his near relation William Clerk, Adam Ferguson, his hereditary friend and especial favourite, and their lifelong intimate, Scott. They remained with him for two or three days, in the course of which they were all so much delighted with their host, and he with them, that it was resolved to reassemble the party, with a few additions, at the same season of every following year. This was the origin of the Blair-Adam Club, the regular members of which were in number nine; viz., the four already named—the Chief Commissioner's son, Admiral Sir Charles Adam—his son-in-law, the late Mr Anstruther Thomson of Charleton, in Fifeshire—Mr Thomas Thomson, the Deputy Register of Scotland—his brother, the Rev. John Thomson, minister of Duddingston, who, though a most diligent and affectionate parish-priest, has found leisure to make himself one of the first masters of the British School of Landscape Painting—and the Right Hon. Sir Samuel Shepherd, who, after filling with high distinction the office of Attorney-General in England, became Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Scotland, shortly after the third anniversary of this brotherhood, into which he was immediately welcomed with unanimous cordiality. They usually contrived to meet on a Friday; spent the Saturday in a ride to some scene of historical interest within an easy distance; enjoyed a quiet Sunday at home—"duly attending divine worship at the Kirk of Cleish (not Cleishbotham)"—gave Monday morning to another Antiquarian excursion, and returned to Edinburgh in time for the Courts of Tuesday.

From 1816 to 1831 inclusive, Sir Walter was a constant attendant at these meetings. He visited in this way Castle Campbell, Magus Moor, Falkland, Dunfermline, St Andrews, and many other scenes of ancient celebrity; to one of those trips we must ascribe his dramatic sketch of *Macduff's Cross*—and to that of the dog-days of 1819, we owe the weightier obligation of *The Abbot*.

I expect an easy forgiveness for introducing from the *liber rarissimus* of Blair-Adam the page that belongs to that particular meeting—which, though less numerous than usual, is recorded as having been "most pleasing and delightful." "There were," writes the President, "only five of us; the Chief Baron, Sir Walter, Mr Clerk, Charles Adam, and myself. The weather was sultry, almost beyond bearing. We did not stir beyond the bounds of the pleasure-ground, indeed not far from the vicinity of the house; wandering from one shady place to another; lolling upon the grass, or sitting upon prostrate trees, not yet carried away by the purchaser. Our conversation was constant, though tranquil; and what might be expected from Mr Clerk, who is a superior converser, and whose mind is stored with knowledge; and from Sir Walter Scott, who has let the public know what his powers are. Our talk was of all sorts (except of *beeves*). Besides a display of their historic knowledge, at once extensive and correct, they touched frequently on the pleasing reminiscences of their early days. Shepherd and I could not go back to those periods; but we could trace our own intimacy and constant friendship for more than forty years back, when in 1783 we began our professional pursuits on the Circuit. So that if Scott could describe, with inconceivable humour, their doings at Mr Murray's of Simprim, when emerging from boyhood;

when he, and Murray, and Clerk, and Adam Ferguson acted plays in the schoolroom (Simprim making the dominie bear his part)—when Ferguson was prompter, orchestra, and audience—and as Scott said, representing the whole pit, kicked up an 'O. P.' row by anticipation; and many other such recollections—Shepherd and I could tell of our Circuit fooleries, as old Fielding (the son of the great novelist) called them—of the Circuit songs which Will Fielding made and sung,—and of the grave Sir William Grant (then a briefless barrister), ycleped by Fielding the Chevalier Grant, bearing his part in those fooleries, enjoying all our pranks with great zest, and who talked of them with delight to his dying day. When the conversation took a graver tone, and turned upon literary subjects, the Chief-Baron took a great share in it; for notwithstanding his infirmity of deafness, he is a most pleasing and agreeable converser, and readily picks up what is passing; and having a classical mind, and classical information, gives a pleasing, gentlemanly, and well-informed tone to general conversation.—Before I bring these recollections of our social and cheerful doings to a close, let me observe, that there was a characteristic feature attending them, which it would be injustice to the individuals who composed our parties not to mention. The whole set of us were addicted to take a full share of conversation, and to discuss every subject that occurred with sufficient keenness. The topics were multifarious, and the opinions of course various; but during the whole time of our intercourse, for so many years, four days at a time, and always together, except when we were asleep, there never was the least tendency on any occasion to any unruly debate, nor to any thing that deviated from the pure delight of social intercourse."

The Chief-Commissioner adds the following particulars in his appendix:—"Our return from Blair-Adam (after the first meeting of the Club) was very early on a Tuesday morning, that we might reach the Courts by nine o'clock. An occurrence took place near the Hawe's Inn, which left little doubt upon my mind that Sir Walter Scott was the author of Waverley, of Guy Mannering, and of the Antiquary, his only novels then published. The morning was prodigiously fine, and the sea as smooth as glass. Sir Walter and I were standing on the beach, enjoying the prospect; the other gentlemen were not come from the boat. The porpoises were rising in great numbers, when Sir Walter said to me, 'Look at them, how they are showing themselves; what fine fellows they are! I have the greatest respect for them: I would as soon kill a man as a phoca.' I could not conceive that the same idea could occur to two men respecting this animal, and set down that it could only be Sir Walter Scott who made the phoca have the better of the battle with the Antiquary's nephew, Captain M'Intyre.

"Soon after, another occurrence quite confirmed me as to the authorship of the novels. On that visit to Blair-Adam, in course of conversation, I mentioned an anecdote about Wilkie, the author of the Epigoniad, who was but a formal poet, but whose conversation was most amusing, and full of fancy. Having heard much of him in my family, where he had been very intimate, I went, when quite a lad, to St Andrews, where he was a Professor, for the purpose of visiting him. I had scarcely let him know who I was, when he said, 'Mr William, were you ever in this place before?' I said no. 'Then, sir, you must go and look at Regulus' Tower,—no doubt you will have something of an eye of an architect about you;—walk up to it at an angle, ad-

vance and recede until you get to see it at its proper distance, and come back and tell me whether you ever saw any thing so beautiful in building: till I saw that tower, and studied it, I thought the beauty of architecture had consisted in curly-wurlies, but now I find it consists in symmetry and proportion.' In the following winter Rob Roy was published, and there I read, that the Cathedral of Glasgow was 'a respectable Gothic structure, without any *curly-wurlies*.'

"But what confirmed, and was certainly meant to disclose to me the author (and that in a very elegant manner), was the mention of the *Kiery Craigs*—a picturesque piece of scenery in the grounds of Blair-Adam—as being in the vicinity of Kelty Bridge, the *howf* of Auchtermuchty, the Kinross carrier.

"It was only an intimate friend of the family, in the habit of coming to Blair-Adam, who could know any thing of the Kiery Craigs, or its name; and both the scenery and the name had attractions for Sir Walter.

"At our first meeting after the publication of the 'Abbot,' when the party was assembled on the top of the rock, the Chief-Baron Shepherd, looking Sir Walter full in the face, and stamping his staff on the ground, said, 'Now, Sir Walter, I think we be upon the top of the Kiery *Craggs*.' Sir Walter preserved profound silence; but there was a conscious looking down, and a considerable elongation of his upper lip."

Since I have obtained permission to quote from this private volume, I may as well mention that I was partly moved to ask that favour, by the author's own confession, that his "Blair-Adam, from 1733 to 1834," originated in a suggestion of Scott's. "It was," says the Judge, "on a fine Sunday, lying on the grassy summit of Bennarty, above its craggy brow, that Sir Walter

said, looking first at the flat expanse of Kinross-shire (on the south side of the Ochils), and then at the space which Blair-Adam fills between the hill of Drumglow (the highest of the Cleish hills), and the valley of Lochore—' What an extraordinary thing it is, that here to the north so little appears to have been done, when there are so many proprietors to work upon it; and to the south, here is a district of country entirely made by the efforts of one family, in three generations, and one of them amongst us in the full enjoyment of what has been done by his two predecessors and himself? Blair-Adam, as I have always heard, had a wild, uncomely, and unhospitable appearance, before its improvements were begun. It would be most curious to record in writing its original state, and trace its gradual progress to its present condition.'" Upon this suggestion, enforced by the approbation of the other members present, the President of the Blair-Adam Club commenced arranging the materials for what constitutes a most instructive as well as entertaining history of the Agricultural and Arboricultural progress of his domains, in the course of a hundred years, under his grandfather, his father (the celebrated architect), and himself. And Sir Walter had only suggested to his friend of Kinross-shire what he was resolved to put into practice with regard to his own improvements on Tweed-side; for he begun at precisely the same period to keep a regular Journal of all his rural transactions, under the title of "SYLVA ABBOTSFORDIENSIS."

For reasons, as we have seen, connected with the affairs of the Ballantynes, Messrs Longman published the first edition of The Monastery; and similar circumstances induced Sir Walter to associate this house with that of Constable in the succeeding novel. Constable disliked its title, and would fain have had *the Nunnery*

instead: but Scott stuck to his *Abbot*. The bookseller grumbled a little, but was soothed by the author's reception of his request that Queen Elizabeth might be brought into the field in his next romance, as a companion to the Mary Stuart of the Abbot. Scott would not indeed indulge him with the choice of the particular period of Elizabeth's reign, indicated in the proposed title of *The Armada;* but expressed his willingness to take up his own old favourite, the legend of Meikle's ballad. He wished to call the novel, like the ballad, *Cumnor-hall*, but in further deference to Constable's wishes, substituted "Kenilworth." John Ballantyne objected to this title, and told Constable the result would be "something worthy of the kennel;" but Constable had all reason to be satisfied with the child of his christening. His partner, Mr Cadell, says—"his vanity boiled over so much at this time, on having his suggestion gone into, that when in his high moods he used to stalk up and down his room, and exclaim, 'By G——, I am all but the author of the Waverley Novels!'" Constable's bibliographical knowledge, however, it is but fair to say, was really of most essential service to Scott upon many of these occasions; and his letter (now before me) proposing the subject of *The Armada*, furnished the Novelist with such a catalogue of materials for the illustration of the period as may, probably enough, have called forth some very energetic expression of thankfulness.

Scott's kindness secured for John Ballantyne the usual interest in the profits of Kenilworth, the last of his great works in which this friend was to have any concern. I have already mentioned the obvious drooping of his health and strength; and a document to be introduced presently, will show that John himself had occasional glimpses, at least, of his danger, before the close

of 1819. Nevertheless, his spirits continued, at the time of which I am now treating, to be in general as high as ever; nay, it was now, after his maladies had taken a very serious shape, and it was hardly possible to look on him without anticipating a speedy termination of his career, that the gay, hopeful spirit of the shattered and trembling invalid led him to plunge into a new stream of costly indulgence. It was an amiable point in his character that he had always retained a tender fondness for his native place. He had now taken up the ambition of rivalling his illustrious friend, in some sort, by providing himself with a summer retirement amidst the scenery of his boyhood; and it need not be doubted, at the same time, that in erecting a villa at Kelso, he anticipated and calculated on substantial advantages from its vicinity to Abbotsford.

One fine day of this autumn, I accompanied Sir Walter to inspect the progress of this edifice, which was to have the title of *Walton Hall.* John had purchased two or three old houses of two stories in height, with knotched gables, and thatched roofs, near the end of the long, original street of Kelso, and not far from the gateway of the Duke of Roxburghe's magnificent park, with their small gardens and paddocks running down to the margin of the Tweed. He had already fitted up convenient bachelor's lodgings in one of the primitive tenements, and converted the others into a goodly range of stabling, and was now watching the completion of his new *corps de logis* behind, which included a handsome entrance-hall, or saloon, destined to have old Piscator's bust, on a stand, in the centre, and to be embellished all round with emblems of his sport. Behind this were spacious rooms overlooking the little *pleasance* which was to be laid out somewhat in the Italian style, with ornamental steps, a fountain, and

*jet d'eau*, and a broad terrace hanging over the river, and commanding an extensive view of perhaps the most beautiful landscape in Scotland. In these new dominions John received us with pride and hilarity; and we then walked with him over this pretty town, lounged away an hour among the ruins of the Abbey, and closed our perambulation with *the Garden*, where Scott had spent some of the happiest of his early summers, and where he pointed out with sorrowful eyes the site of the Platanus, under which he first read Percy's Reliques. Returning to John's villa, we dined gaily, *al fresco*, by the side of his fountain; and after not a few bumpers to the prosperity of Walton Hall, he mounted Old Mortality, and escorted us for several miles on our ride homewards. It was this day that, overflowing with kindly zeal, Scott revived one of the long-forgotten projects of their early connexion in business, and offered his services as editor of a Novelist's Library, to be printed and published for the sole benefit of his host. The offer was eagerly embraced, and when two or three mornings afterwards John returned Sir Walter's visit, he had put into his hands the MS. of that admirable life of Fielding, which was followed at brief intervals, as the arrangements of the projected work required, by others of Smollett, Richardson, Defoe, Sterne, Johnson, Goldsmith, Le Sage, Horace Walpole, Cumberland, Mrs Radcliffe, Charles Johnstone, Clara Reeve, Charlotte Smith, and Robert Bage. The publication of the first volume of "Ballantyne's Novelist's Library" did not take place, however, until February 1821; and the series was closed soon after the proprietor's death in the ensuing summer. In spite of the charming prefaces in which Scott combines all the graces of his easy narrative with a perpetual stream of deep and gentle wisdom in commenting on the tempers and fortunes of his best predecessors in novel literature, and

also with expositions of his own critical views, which prove how profoundly he had investigated the principles and practice of those masters before he struck out a new path for himself—in spite of these delightful and valuable essays, the publication was not prosperous. Constable, after Ballantyne's death, would willingly have resumed the scheme. But Scott had by that time convinced himself that it was in vain to expect much success for a collection so bulky and miscellaneous, and which must of necessity include a large proportion of matter, condemned by the purity, whether real or affected, of modern taste. He could hardly have failed to perceive, on reflection, that his own novels, already constituting an extensive library of fiction, in which no purist could pretend to discover danger for the morals of youth, had in fact superseded the works of less strait-laced days in the only permanently and solidly profitable market for books of this order. He at all events declined Constable's proposition for renewing and extending this attempt. What he did was done gratuitously for John Ballantyne's sake; and I have dwelt on it thus long, because, as the reader will perceive by and by, it was so done during (with one exception) the very busiest period of Scott's literary life.

Shortly before Scott wrote the following letters, he had placed his second son (at this time in his fifteenth year) under the care of the Reverend John Williams, who had been my intimate friend and companion at Oxford, with a view of preparing him for that University. Mr Williams was then Vicar of Lampeter, in Cardiganshire, and the high satisfaction with which his care of Charles Scott inspired Sir Walter, induced several other Scotch gentlemen of distinction by and by to send their sons also to his Welsh parsonage; the result of which northern connexions was important to the fortunes of one of

the most accurate and extensive scholars, and most skilful teachers of the present time.

*To Walter Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars, Cork.*

"Edinburgh, 14th November, 1820.

"My dear Walter,

"I send you a cheque on Coutts for your quarter's allowance. I hope you manage your cash like a person of discretion—above all, avoid the card tables of ancient dowagers. Always remember that my fortune, however much my efforts may increase it, and although I am improving it for your benefit, not for any that can accrue in my own time,—yet never can be more than a decent independence, and therefore will make a poor figure unless managed with good sense, moderation, and prudence—which are habits easily acquired in youth, while habitual extravagance is a fault very difficult to be afterwards corrected.

"We came to town yesterday, and bade adieu to Abbotsford for the season. Fife,* to mamma's great surprise and scandal, chose to stay at Abbotsford with Mai, and plainly denied to follow the carriage—so our canine establishment in Castle Street is reduced to little Ury.† We spent two days at Arniston, on the road, and on coming here, found Sophia as nicely and orderly settled in her house as if she had been a married woman these five years. I believe she is very happy—perhaps unusually so, for her wishes are moderate, and all seem anxious to please her. She is preparing in due time for the arrival of a little stranger, who will make you an uncle and me (God help me!) a grandpapa.

"The Round Towers you mention are very curious, and seem to have been built, as the Irish hackney-

* *Finette*—a spaniel of Lady Scott's.

† *Urisk*—a small terrier of the long silky-haired Kintail breed.

coachman said of the Martello one at the Black Rock, 'to puzzle posterity.' There are two of them in Scotland—both excellent pieces of architecture; one at Brechin, built quite close to the old church, so as to appear united with it, but in fact it is quite detached from the church, and sways from it in a high wind, when it vibrates like a lighthouse. The other is at Abernethy in Perthshire—said to have been the capital city of the Picts. I am glad to see you observe objects of interest and curiosity, because otherwise a man may travel over the universe without acquiring any more knowledge than his horse does.

"We had our hunt and our jollification after it on last Wednesday. It went off in great style, although I felt a little sorry at having neither Charles nor you in the field. By the way, Charles seems most admirably settled. I had a most sensible letter on the subject from Mr Williams, who appears to have taken great pains, and to have formed a very just conception both of his merits and foibles. When I have an opportunity, I will hand you his letter; for it will entertain you, it is so correct a picture of Monsieur Charles.

"Dominie Thomson has gone to a Mrs Dennistoun, of Colgrain, to drill her youngsters. I am afraid he will find a change; but I hope to have a nook open to him by and by—as a sort of retreat or harbour on his lee. Adieu, my dear—always believe me your affectionate father, WALTER SCOTT."

*To Mr Charles Scott, care of the Rev. John Williams, Lampeter.*

"Edinburgh, 14th Nov. 1820.

"My dear boy Charles,

"Your letters made us all very happy, and I trust you are now comfortably settled and plying your task hard. Mr Williams will probably ground you more

perfectly in the grammar of the classical languages than has hitherto been done, and this you will at first find but dry work. But there are many indispensable reasons why you must bestow the utmost attention upon it. A perfect knowledge of the classical languages has been fixed upon, and not without good reason, as the mark of a well-educated young man; and though people may have scrambled into distinction without it, it is always with the greatest difficulty, just like climbing over a wall, instead of giving your ticket at the door. Perhaps you may think another proof of a youth's talents might have been adopted; but what good will arise from your thinking so, if the general practice of society has fixed on this particular branch of knowledge as the criterion? Wheat or barley were as good grain, I suppose, as *sesamum;* but it was only to *sesamum* that the talisman gave way, and the rock opened; and it is equally certain that, if you are not a well-founded grammatical scholar in Greek and Latin, you will in vain present other qualifications to distinction. Besides, the study of grammar, from its very asperities, is calculated to teach youth that patient labour which is necessary to the useful exertion of the understanding upon every other branch of knowledge; and your great deficiency is want of steadiness and of resolute application to the dry as well as the interesting parts of your learning. But exerting yourself, as I have no doubt you will do, under the direction of so learned a man, and so excellent a teacher as Mr Williams, and being without the temptations to idleness which occurred at home, I have every reason to believe that, to your natural quickness you will presently add such a *habit* of application and steadiness, as will make you a respected member of society, perhaps a distinguished one. It is very probable that the whole success of your future life may depend on the manner in

which you employ *the next two years*; and I am therefore most anxious you should fully avail yourself of the opportunities now afforded you.

"You must not be too much disconcerted with the apparent dryness of your immediate studies. Language is the great mark by which man is distinguished from the beasts, and a strict acquaintance with the manner in which it is composed, becomes, as you follow it a little way, one of the most curious and interesting exercises of the intellect.

"We had our grand hunt on Wednesday last, a fine day, and plenty of sport. We hunted all over Huntly wood, and so on to Halidon and Prieston—saw twelve hares, and killed six, having very hard runs, and turning three packs of grouse completely. In absence of Walter and you, Stenhouse the horse-couper led the field, and rode as if he had been a piece of his horse, sweltering like a wild-drake all through Marriage-Moss at a motion betwixt swimming and riding. One unlucky accident befell. Queen Mab, who was bestrode by Captain Adam, lifted up her heels against Mr Craig of Galashiels,* whose leg she greeted with a thump like a pistol-shot, while by the same movement she very nearly sent the noble Captain over her ears. Mr Craig was helped from horse, but would not permit his boot to be drawn off, protesting he would faint if he saw the bone of his leg sticking through the stocking. Some thought he was reluctant to exhibit his legs in their primitive and unclothed simplicity, in respect they have an unhappy resemblance to a pair of tongs. As for the Captain, he declared that if the accident had happened *in action*, the surgeon and drum-boys would have had off, not his *boot*

* Mr George Craig, factor to the laird of Gala, and manager of a little branch bank at Galashiels. This worthy man was one of the regular members of the Abbotsford hunt.

only, but his *leg to boot*, before he could have uttered a remonstrance. At length Gala and I prevailed to have the boot drawn, and to my great joy I found the damage was not serious, though the pain must have been severe.

"On Saturday we left Abbotsford, and dined and spent Sunday at Arniston, where we had many enquiries after you from Robert Dundas, who was so kind to you last year.

"I must conclude for the present, requesting your earnest pursuit of such branches of study as Mr Williams recommends. In a short time, as you begin to comprehend the subjects you are learning, you will find the path turn smoother, and that which at present seems wrapped up in an inextricable labyrinth of thorns and briers, will at once become easy and attractive.—Always, dear Charlie, your affectionate father, W. S."

On the same day Scott wrote as follows to the manly and amiable author of "Sir Marmaduke Maxwell," who had shortly before sent the MS. of that romantic drama to Abbotsford for his inspection:—

*To Mr Allan Cunningham; care of F. Chantrey, Esq. R.A., London.*

"Edinburgh, 14th November, 1820.

"My dear Allan,

"I have been meditating a long letter to you for many weeks past; but company, and rural business, and rural sports, are very unfavourable to writing letters. I have now a double reason for writing, for I have to thank you for sending me in safety a beautiful specimen of our English Michael's talents in the cast of my venerable friend Mr Watt: it is a most striking resemblance, with all that living character which we are apt to think life itself alone can exhibit. I hope Mr Chantrey does

not permit his distinguished skill either to remain unexercised, or to be lavished exclusively on subjects of little interest. I would like to see him engaged on some subject of importance completely adapted to the purpose of his chisel, and demanding its highest powers. Pray remember me to him most kindly.

"I have perused twice your curious and interesting manuscript. Many parts of the poetry are eminently beautiful, though I fear the great length of the piece, and some obscurity of the plot, would render it unfit for dramatic representation. There is also a fine tone of supernatural impulse spread over the whole action, which I think a common audience would not be likely to adopt or comprehend—though I own that to me it has a very powerful effect. Speaking of dramatic composition in general, I think it is almost essential (though the rule be most difficult in practice) that the plot, or business of the piece, should advance with every line that is spoken. The fact is, the drama is addressed chiefly to the eyes, and as much as can be, by any possibility, represented on the stage, should neither be told or described. Of the miscellaneous part of a large audience, many do not understand, nay, many cannot hear, either narrative or description, but are solely intent upon the action exhibited. It is, I conceive, for this reason that very bad plays, written by performers themselves, often contrive to get through, and not without applause; while others, immeasurably superior in point of poetical merit, fail, merely because the author is not sufficiently possessed of the trick of the scene, or enough aware of the importance of a maxim pronounced by no less a performer than Punch himself—(at least he was the last authority from whom I heard it)—*Push on, keep moving!* Now, in your very ingenious dramatic effort, the interest not only stands still, but sometimes retrogrades. It con-

tains, notwithstanding, many passages of eminent beauty, many specimens of most interesting dialogue; and, on the whole, if it is not fitted for the modern stage, I am not sure that its very imperfections do not render it more fit for the closet, for we certainly do not always read with the greatest pleasure those plays which act best.

"If, however, you should at any time wish to become a candidate for dramatic laurels, I would advise you, in the first place, to consult some professional person of judgment and taste. I should regard friend Terry as an excellent Mentor, and I believe he would concur with me in recommending that at least one-third of the drama be retrenched, that the plot should be rendered simpler, and the motives more obvious; and I think the powerful language and many of the situations might then have their full effect upon the audience. I am uncertain if I have made myself sufficiently understood; but I would say, for example, that it is ill explained by what means Comyn and his gang, who land as shipwrecked men, become at once possessed of the old lord's domains, merely by killing and taking possession. I am aware of what you mean, namely, that being attached to the then rulers, he is supported in his ill-acquired power by their authority. But this is imperfectly brought out, and escaped me at the first reading. The superstitious motives, also, which induced the shepherds to delay their vengeance, are not likely to be intelligible to the generality of the hearers. It would seem more probable that the young Baron should have led his faithful vassals to avenge the death of his parents; and it has escaped me what prevents him from taking this direct and natural course. Besides it is, I believe, a rule (and it seems a good one) that one single interest, to which every other is subordinate, should occupy the whole play,—each separate object having just the effect of

a mill-dam, sluicing off a certain portion of the sympathy, which should move on with increasing force and rapidity to the catastrophe. Now, in your work, there are several divided points of interest—there is the murder of the old Baron—the escape of his wife —that of his son—the loss of his bride—the villanous artifices of Comyn to possess himself of her person, and, finally, the fall of Comyn, and acceleration of the vengeance due to his crimes. I am sure your own excellent sense, which I admire as much as I do your genius, will give me credit for my frankness in these matters; I only know, that I do not know many persons on whose performances I would venture to offer so much criticism.

"I will return the manuscript under Mr Freeling's Post-Office cover, and I hope it will reach you safe.—Adieu, my leal and esteemed friend—yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Shortly afterwards Mr Cunningham, thanking his critic, said he had not yet received back his MS.; but that he hoped the delay had been occasioned by Sir Walter's communication of it to some friend of theatrical experience. He also mentioned his having undertaken a collection of "The Songs of Scotland," with notes. The answer was in these terms:—

*To Mr Allan Cunningham.*

"My dear Allan,

"It was as you supposed—I detained your manuscript to read it over with Terry. The plot appears to Terry as to me ill-combined, which is a great defect in a drama, though less perceptible in the closet than on the stage. Still if the mind can be kept upon one unbroken course of interest, the effect even in perusal is more gra-

tifying. I have always considered this as the great secret in dramatic poetry, and conceive it one of the most difficult exercises of the invention possible to conduct a story through five acts, developing it gradually in every scene, so as to keep up the attention, yet never till the very conclusion permitting the nature of the catastrophe to become visible,—and all the while to accompany this by the necessary delineation of character and beauty of language. I am glad, however, that you mean to preserve in some permanent form your very curious drama, which, if not altogether fitted for the stage, cannot be read without very much and very deep interest.

"I am glad you are about Scottish song. No man—not Robert Burns himself—has contributed more beautiful effusions to enrich it. Here and there I would pluck a flower from your Posy to give what remains an effect of greater simplicity, but luxuriance can only be the fault of genius, and many of your songs are, I think, unmatched. I would instance—"It's hame and it's hame," which my daughter Mrs Lockhart sings with such uncommon effect. You cannot do any thing either in the way of original composition, or collection, or criticism, that will not be highly acceptable to all who are worth pleasing in the Scottish public—and I pray you to proceed with it.

"Remember me kindly to Chantrey. I am happy my effigy is to go with that of Wordsworth*, for (differing from him in very many points of taste) I do not know a man more to be venerated for uprightness of heart and loftiness of genius. Why he will sometimes choose to crawl upon all fours, when God has given him so noble a countenance to lift to heaven, I am as little able to ac-

* Mr Cunningham had told Scott that Chantrey's bust of Wordsworth (another of his noblest works) was also to be produced at the Royal Academy's Exhibition for 1821.

count for as for his quarrelling (as you tell me) with the wrinkles which time and meditation have stamped his brow withal.

"I am obliged to conclude hastily, having long letters to write—God wot upon very different subjects. I pray my kind respects to Mrs Chantrey.—Believe me, dear Allan, very truly yours, &c., WALTER SCOTT."

The following letter touches on the dropping of the Bill which had been introduced by Government for the purpose of degrading the consort of George the Fourth; the riotous rejoicings of the Edinburgh mob on that occasion; and Scott's acquiescence in the request of the guardians of the young Duke of Buccleuch, that he should act as chancellor of the jury about to *serve* his grace *heir* (as the law phrase goes) to the Scottish estates of his family.

*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. &c.*

"Edinburgh, 30th November, 1820.

"My dear Lord,

"I had your letter some time since, and have now to congratulate you on your two months' spell of labour-in-vain duty being at length at an end. The old sign of the Labour-in-vain Tavern was a fellow attempting to scrub a black-a-moor white; but the present difficulty seems to lie in showing that one *is* black. Truly, I congratulate the country on the issue; for, since the days of Queen Dollalolla* and the *Rumti-iddity* chorus in T-

* *Queen.* "What though I now am half-seas o'- -om
I scorn to baulk this bout: -er,
Of stiff rack-punch fe-'
'Fore Geor- -n bowls a score,
*Chorus.*—Rumti-iddity, row, row, row,
If we'd a good sup, we'd take it now."
FIELDING'S *Tom Thumb.*

Thumb, never was there so jolly a representative of royalty. A good ballad might be made by way of parody on Gay's Jonathan Wild,—

> Her Majesty's trial has set us at ease,
> And every wife round me may kiss if she please.

We had the Marquis of Bute and Francis Jeffrey very brilliant in George Street, and I think one grocer besides. I was hard threatened by letter, but I caused my servant to say in the quarter where I thought the threatening came from, that I should suffer my windows to be broken like a Christian, but if any thing else was attempted, I should become as great a heathen as the Dey of Algiers. We were passed over, but many houses were terribly *Cossaqué*, as was the phrase in Paris 1814 and 1815. The next night, being, like true Scotsmen, wise behind the hand, the bailies had a sufficient force sufficiently arranged, and put down every attempt to riot. If the same precautions had been taken before, the town would have been saved some disgrace, and the loss of at least L.1000 worth of property. Hay Donaldson* is getting stout again, and up to the throat in business; there is no getting a word out of him that does not smell of parchment and special service. He asked me, as it is to be a mere *law* service, to act as chancellor on the Duke's inquest, which honourable office I will of course undertake with great willingness, and discharge, I mean the *hospitable* part of it, to the best of my power. I think you are right to avoid a more extended service, as 200 certainly would not clear the expense, as you L.1000 dine at least four counties, and as sweetly would have to [illegible] on Chevy Chase, sing, with Duke Wharton,

* This gentleman, Scott's friend and confidential solicitor, had obtained, (I believe) on his recommendation, the legal management of the Buccleuch affairs in Scotland.

Pity it were
So much good wine to spill,
As these bold freeholders would drink,
Before they had their fill.

I hope we shall all live to see our young baron take his own chair, and feast the land in his own way. Ever your Lordship's most truly faithful

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S.—In the illumination row, young Romilly was knocked down and robbed by the mob, just while he was in the act of declaiming on the impropriety of having constables and volunteers to interfere with the harmless mirth of the people."

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*To Mr Charles Scott, care of the Rev. John Williams, Lampeter.*

"Edinburgh, 19th Dec. 1820.

"My dear Charles,

"We begin to be afraid that, in improving your head, you have lost the use of your fingers, or got so deep into the Greek and Latin grammar, that you have forgotten how to express yourself in your own language. To ease our anxious minds in these important doubts, we beg you will write as soon as possible, and give us a full account of your proceedings, as I do not approve of long intervals of silence, or think that you need to stand very rigorously upon the exchange of letters, especially as mine are so much the longest.

"I rely upon it that you are now working hard in the classical mine, getting out the rubbish as fast as you can, and preparing yourself to collect the ore. I cannot too much impress upon your mind that *labour* is the condition which God has imposed on us in every station

of life—there is nothing worth having that can be had without it, from the bread which the peasant wins with the sweat of his brow, to the sports by which the rich man must get rid of his ennui. The only difference betwixt them is, that the poor man labours to get a dinner to his appetite, the rich man to get an appetite to his dinner. As for knowledge, it can no more be planted in the human mind without labour, than a field of wheat can be produced without the previous use of the plough. There is indeed this great difference, that chance or circumstances may so cause it that another shall reap what the farmer sows; but no man can be deprived, whether by accident or misfortune, of the fruits of his own studies, and the liberal and extended acquisitions of knowledge which he makes are all for his own use. Labour, my dear boy, therefore, and improve the time. In youth our steps are light, and our minds are ductile, and knowledge is easily laid up. But if we neglect our spring, our summers will be useless and contemptible, our harvest will be chaff, and the winter of our old age unrespected and desolate.

"It is now Christmas-tide, and it comes sadly round to me as reminding me of your excellent grandmother, who was taken from us last year at this time. Do you, my dear Charles, pay attention to the wishes of your parents while they are with you, that you may have no self-reproach when you think of them at a future period.

"You hear the Welsh spoken much about you, and if you can pick it up without interfering with more important labours, it will be worth while. I suppose you can easily get a grammar and dictionary. It is, you know, the language spoken by the Britons before the invasion of the Anglo-Saxons, who brought in the principal ingredients of our present language, called from thence English. It was afterwards, however,

much mingled with Norman French, the language of William the Conqueror and his followers; so if you can pick up a little of the Cambro-British speech, it will qualify you hereafter to be a good philologist, should your genius turn towards languages. Pray, have you yet learned who Howel Dha was?—Glendower you are well acquainted with by reading Shakspeare. The wild mysterious barbaric grandeur with which he has invested that chieftain has often struck me as very fine. I wish we had some more of him.

"We are all well here, and I hope to get to Abbotsford for a few days—they cannot be many—in the ensuing vacation, when I trust to see the planting has got well forward. All are well here, and Mr Cadell* is come back, and gives a pleasant account of your journey. Let me hear from you very soon, and tell me if you expect any *skating*, and whether there is any ice in Wales. I presume there will be a merry Christmas, and beg my best wishes on the subject to Mr Williams, his sister and family. The Lockharts dine with us, and the Scotts of Harden, James Scott† with his pipes, and I hope Captain Adam. We will remember your health in a glass of claret just about *six* o'clock at night; so that you will know exactly (allowing for variation of time) what we are doing at the same moment.

"But I think I have written quite enough to a young Welshman, who has forgot all his Scots kith, kin, and allies. Mamma and Anne send many loves. Walter came like a shadow, and so departed—after about ten days' stay. The effect was quite dramatic, for the door

* Mr Robert Cadell, of the house of Constable, had this year conveyed Charles Scott from Abbotsford to Lampeter.

† Sir Walter's cousin, a son of his uncle Thomas. See *ante*, vol. i., p. 74.

was flung open as we were about to go down to dinner, and Turner announced *Captain Scott.* We could not conceive who was meant, when in walked Walter as large as life. He is positively a new edition of the Irish giant. I beg my kind respects to Mr Williams. At his leisure I should be happy to have a line from him.—I am, my dear little boy, always your affectionate father, WALTER SCOTT."

The next letter contains a brief allusion to an affair, which in the life of any other man of letters would have deserved to be considered as of some consequence. The late Sir James Hall of Dunglass resigned, in November, 1820, the Presidency of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; and the Fellows, though they had on all former occasions selected a man of science to fill that post, paid Sir Walter the compliment of unanimously requesting him to be Sir James's successor in it. He felt and expressed a natural hesitation about accepting this honour—which at first sight seemed like invading the proper department of another order of scholars. But when it was urged upon him that the Society is really a double one—embracing a section for literature as well as one of science,—and that it was only due to the former to let it occasionally supply the chief of the whole body, Scott acquiesced in the flattering proposal; and his gentle skill was found effective, so long as he held the Chair, in maintaining and strengthening the tone of good feeling and good manners which can alone render the meetings of such a Society either agreeable or useful. The new President himself soon began to take a lively interest in many of their discussions—those at least which pointed to any discovery of practical use;—and he, by and by, added some eminent men of science, with whom his acquaintance had hitherto been slight, to the list of his

most valued friends :—I may mention in particular Dr, now Sir David, Brewster.

Sir Walter also alludes to an institution of a far different description,—that called "The Celtic Society of Edinburgh;" a club established mainly for the patronage of ancient Highland manners and customs, especially the use of "the Garb of Old Gaul"—though part of their funds have always been applied to the really important object of extending education in the wilder districts of the north. At their annual meetings Scott was, as may be supposed, a regular attendant. He appeared, as in duty bound, in the costume of the Fraternity, and was usually followed by "John of Skye," in a still more complete, or rather incomplete, style of equipment.

*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. &c., Ditton Park.*

"Edinburgh, 17th January, 1821.

"My dear Lord,

"We had a tight day of it on Monday last, both dry and wet. The dry part was as dry as may be, consisting in rehearsing the whole lands of the Buccleuch estate for five mortal hours, although Donaldson had kindly selected a clerk whose tongue went over baronies, lordships, and regalities at as high a rate of top speed as ever Eclipse displayed in clearing the course at Newmarket. The evening went off very well—considering that while looking forward with the natural feelings of hope and expectation on behalf of our young friend, most of us who were present could not help casting looks of sad remembrance on the days we had seen. However, we did very well, and I kept the chair till eleven, when we had coffee, and departed, "no very fou, but gaily yet." Besides the law gentlemen and immediate agents of the family, I picked up on my own

account Tom Ogilvie,* Sir Harry Hay Macdougal, Harden and his son, Gala, and Captain John Ferguson, whom I asked as from myself, stating that the party was to be quite private. I suppose there was no harm in this, and it helped us well on. I believe your nephew and my young chief enters life with as favourable auspices as could well attend him, for to few youths can attach so many good wishes, and *none* can look back to more estimable examples both in his father and grandfather. I think he will succeed to the warm and social affections of his relatives, which, if they sometimes occasion pain to those who possess them, contain also the purest sources of happiness as well as of virtue.

"Our late Pitt meeting amounted to about 800, a most tremendous multitude. I had charge of a separate room, containing a detachment of about 250, and gained a headach of two days, by roaring to them for five or six hours almost incessantly. The Foxites had also a very numerous meeting, 500 at least, but sad scamps. We had a most formidable band of young men, almost all born gentlemen and zealous proselytes. We shall now begin to look anxiously to London for news. I suppose they will go by the ears in the House of Commons; but I trust Ministers will have a great majority. If not they should go out, and let the others make the best of it with their acquitted Queen, who will be a ticklish card in their hand, for she is by nature *intrigante* more ways than one. The loss of Canning is a serious disadvantage. Many of our friends have good talents and good taste; but I think he alone has that higher order of parts which we call genius. I wish he had had more prudence to guide it. He has been a most unlucky poli-

* The late Thomas Elliott Ogilvie, Esq. of Chesters, in Roxburghshire—one of Sir Walter's chief friends among his country neighbours.

tician. Adieu. Best love to all at Ditton, and great respect withal. My best compliments attend my young chief, now seated, to use an Oriental phrase, upon the *Musnud*. I am almost knocked up with public meetings, for the triple Hecate was a joke to my plurality of offices this week. On Friday I had my Pittite stewardship; on Monday my chancellorship; yesterday my presidentship of the Royal Society, for I had a meeting of that learned body at my house last night, where mulled wine and punch were manufactured and consumed according to the latest philosophical discoveries. Besides all this, I have before my eyes the terrors of a certain Highland Association, who dine bonneted and *kilted* in the old fashion (all save myself, of course), and armed to the teeth. This is rather severe service; but men who wear broad-swords, dirks, and pistols, are not to be neglected in these days; and the Gael are very loyal lads, so it is as well to keep up an influence with them. Once more, my dear Lord, farewell, and believe always most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

In the course of the riotous week commemorated in the preceding letter, appeared Kenilworth, in 3 vols. post 8vo, like Ivanhoe, which form was adhered to with all the subsequent novels of the series. Kenilworth was one of the most successful of them all at the time of publication; and it continues, and, I doubt not, will ever continue, to be placed in the very highest rank of prose fiction. The rich variety of character, and scenery, and incident in this novel, has never indeed been surpassed; nor, with the one exception of the Bride of Lammermoor, has Scott bequeathed us a deeper and more affecting tragedy than that of Amy Robsart.

## CHAPTER III.

VISIT TO LONDON—PROJECT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE—AFFAIRS OF THE 18TH HUSSARS—MARRIAGE OF CAPTAIN ADAM FERGUSON—LETTERS TO LORD SIDMOUTH—LORD MONTAGU—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM—MRS LOCKHART—AND CORNET SCOTT.

1821.

BEFORE the end of January, 1821, Scott went to London, at the request of the other Clerks of Session, that he might watch over the progress of an Act of Parliament, designed to relieve them from a considerable part of their drudgery, in attesting recorded deeds by signature; and his stay was prolonged until near the beginning of the Summer term of his Court. His letters while in London are chiefly to his own family, and on strictly domestic topics; but I shall extract a few of them, chiefly (for reasons which I have already sufficiently intimated) those addressed to his son the Cornet. I need not trespass on the reader's attention by any attempt to explain in detail the matters to which these letters refer. It will be seen that Sir Walter had heard with deep concern, some rumours of irregularity in the interior of the 18th Hussars; and that the consequent interference of the then Commander of the forces in Ireland, the late Sir David Baird, had been received in any thing but a spirit of humility. The reports that reached Scott proved to have been grossly exaggerated: but I presume there

had been some relaxation of discipline in the regiment, and Sir Walter was by no means sorry to learn, in the course of the spring, first, that his son had been detached on a small separate service; then that the corps was to be sent to India, in which case he would have a fair pretext for removing him into another regiment; and, finally, that the Duke of York had resolved on reducing the 18th. Cornet Scott—(who had never himself been suspected of sharing in any of the indiscretions which led to this step)—then travelled for some time in Germany, with a view to his improvement in the science of his profession. He afterwards spent a brief period, for the same purpose, in the Royal Military College of Sandhurst; and ere long he obtained a commission as lieutenant in the 15th, or King's Hussars—a regiment which has uniformly, I believe, been ranked among the most distinguished in the service—and in which his father lived to see him Major.

It will also be seen, that during this visit to London, Sir Walter was released from considerable anxiety on account of his daughter Sophia, whom he had left in a weak state of health at Edinburgh, by the intelligence of her safe accouchement of a boy,—John Hugh Lockhart, the "Hugh Littlejohn" of *the Tales of a Grandfather*. The approaching marriage of Captain, now Sir Adam Ferguson, to which some jocular allusions occur, may be classed with these objects of family interest; and that event was the source of unmixed satisfaction to Scott, as it did not interrupt his enjoyment of his old friend's society in the country; for the Captain, though he then pitched a tent for himself, did so at a very short distance from Huntly Burn. I believe the ensuing extracts will need no further commentary.

*To Mrs Lockhart, Great King Street, Edinburgh.*

" Ditton Park, Feb. 18, 1821.

" My dearest Sophia,

" I received as much pleasure, and was relieved from as much anxiety, as ever I felt in my life, by Lockhart's kind note, which acquainted me with the happy period that has been put to your suffering, and, as I hope and trust, to the complaints which occasioned it. You are now, my dearest girl, beginning a new course of pleasures, anxieties, and duties, and the best I can wish for you is, that your little boy may prove the same dutiful and affectionate child which you have always been to me, and that God may give him a sound and healthy mind, with a good constitution of body—the greatest blessings which this earth can bestow. Pray be extremely careful of yourself for some time. Young women are apt to injure their health by thinking themselves well too soon. I beg you to be cautious in this respect.

" The news of the young stranger's arrival was most joyfully received here, and his health and yours toasted in a bumper. Lady Anne is quite well, and Isabella also; and Lady Charlotte, who has rejoined them, is a most beautiful creature indeed. This place is all light and splendour, compared to London, where I was forced to use candles till ten o'clock at least. I have a gay time of it. To-morrow I return to town, and dine with old Sotheby; on Tuesday, with the Duke of Wellington; Wednesday with Croker, and so on. Love to L., the Captain, and the Violet, and give your bantling a kiss extraordinary for Grandpapa. I hope Mungo* approves of the child, for that is a serious point. There are no dogs in the hotel where I lodge, but a tolerably

* Mungo was a favourite Newfoundland dog.

conversible cat, who eats a mess of cream with me in the morning. The little chief and his brother have come over from Eton to see me, so I must break off.—I am, my dear love, most affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

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*To Walter Scott, Esq., Portobello Barracks, Dublin.*

"Waterloo Hotel, Jermyn Street, Feb. 19, 1821.

"My dear Walter,

"I have just received your letter. I send you a draught for L.50, which you must make go as far as you can.

"There is what I have no doubt is a very idle report here, of your paying rather marked attention to one young lady in particular. I beg you would do nothing that can justify such a rumour, as it would excite my *highest displeasure* should you either entangle yourself or any other person. I am, and have always been, quite frank with you, and beg you will be equally so with me. One should, in justice to the young women they live with, be very cautious not to give the least countenance to such rumours. They are not easily avoided, but are always highly prejudicial to the parties concerned; and what begins in folly ends in serious misery—*avis au lecteur.*

Believe me, dear Cornet, your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S.—I wish you could pick me up the Irish lilt of a tune to 'Patrick Fleming.' The song begins—

'Patrick Fleming was a gallant soldier,
He carried his musket over his shoulder.
When I cock my pistol, when I draw my raper,
I make them stand in awe of me, for I am a taker.
Falala,' &c.

" From another verse in the same song, it seems the hero was in such a predicament as your own.

> ' If you be Peter Fleming, as I suppose you be, sir,
> We are three pedlars walking on so free, sir.
> We are three pedlars a-walking on to Dublin,
> With nothing in our pockets to pay for our lodging.
> Falala,' &c."

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*To Walter Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars, Cappoquin.*

" London, 17th March, 1821.

" My dear Commandant of Cappoquin,

" Wishing you joy of your new government, these are to inform you that I am still in London. The late aspersion on your regiment induced me to protract my stay here, with a view to see the Duke of York on your behalf, which I did yesterday. H. R. Highness expressed himself most obligingly disposed, and promised to consider what could best be done to forward your military education. I told him frankly, that in giving you to the King's service I had done all that was in my power to show our attachment to his Majesty and the country which had been so kind to me, and that it was my utmost ambition that you should render yourself capable of serving them both well. He said he would give the affair his particular consideration, and see whether he could put you on the establishment at Sandhurst, without any violent infringement on the rules; and hinted that he would make an exception to the rule of seniority of standing and priority of application in your favour when an opportunity occurs.

" From H. R. H's. very kind expressions I have little doubt you will have more than justice done you in the patronage necessary to facilitate your course through life; but it must be by your own exertions, my dearest

boy, that you must render yourself qualified to avail yourself of the opportunities which you may have offered to you. Work therefore as hard as you can, and do not be discontented for want of assistance of masters, &c., because the knowledge which we acquire by our own unaided efforts, is much more tenaciously retained by the memory, while the exertion necessary to gain it strengthens the understanding. At the same time, I would enquire whether there may not be some catholic priest, or protestant clergyman, or scholar of any description, who, for love or money, would give you a little assistance occasionally. Such persons are to be found almost every where; not professed teachers, but capable of smoothing the road to a willing student. Let me earnestly recommend in your reading to keep fast to particular hours, and suffer no one thing to encroach on the other.

"Charles's last letter was uncommonly steady, and prepared me for one from Mr Williams, in which he expresses satisfaction with his attention, and with his progress in learning, in a much stronger degree than formerly. This is truly comfortable, and may relieve me from the necessity of sending the poor boy to India.

"All in Edinburgh are quite well, and no fears exist saving those of little Catherine * for the baby, lest the fairies take it away before the christening. I will send some books to you from hence, if I can find means to transmit them. I should like you to read with care the campaigns of Buonaparte, which have been written in French with much science.†

"I hope, indeed I am sure, I need not remind you to be very attentive to your duty. You have but a small

* Mrs Lockhart's maid.

† This letter was followed by a copy of General Jomini's celebrated work.

charge, but it is a charge, and rashness or carelessness may lead to discredit in the commandant of Cappoquin, as well as in a field-marshal. In the exercise of your duty, be tender of the lower classes; and as you are strong be merciful. In this you will do your master good service, for show me the manners of the man, and I will judge those of the master.

"In your present situation it may be interesting to you to know that the bill for Catholic Emancipation will pass the Commons without doubt, and very probably the Peers also, unless the Spiritual Lords make a great rally. No body here cares much about it, and if it does not pass this year, it will the next without doubt.

"Among other improvements, I wish you would amend your hand. It is a deplorable scratch, and far the worst of the family. Charles writes a firm good hand in comparison.

"You may address your next to Abbotsford, where I long to be, being heartily tired of fine company and fine living, from dukes and duchesses, down to turbot and plovers' eggs. It is very well for a while, but to be kept at it makes one feel like a poodle dog compelled to stand for ever on his hind legs.—Most affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

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During this visit to London, Sir Walter appears to have been consulted by several persons in authority as to the project of a Society of Literature, for which the King's patronage had been solicited, and which was established soon afterwards—though on a scale less extensive than had been proposed at the outset. He expressed his views on this subject in writing at considerable length to his friend the Hon. John Villiers (now Earl of Clarendon); but of that letter, described to me

as a most admirable one, I have as yet failed to recover a copy. I have little doubt, that both the letter in question and the following, addressed, soon after his arrival at Abbotsford, to the then Secretary of State for the Home Department, were placed in the hands of the King; but it seems probable, that whatever his Majesty may have thought of Scott's representations, he considered himself as already, in some measure, pledged to countenance the projected academy.

*To the Right Hon. the Lord Viscount Sidmouth, &c. &c. &c., Whitehall.*

"Abbotsford, April 20, 1821.

"My dear Lord,

"Owing to my retreat to this place, I was only honoured with your Lordship's letter yesterday. Whatever use can be made of my letter to stop the very ill contrived project to which it relates, will answer the purpose for which it was written. I do not well remember the terms in which my remonstrance to Mr Villiers was couched, for it was positively written betwixt sleeping and waking; but your Lordship will best judge how far the contents may be proper for his Majesty's eye; and if the sentiments appear a little in dishabille, there is the true apology that they were never intended to go to Court. From more than twenty years' intercourse with the literary world, during which I have been more or less acquainted with every distinguished writer of my day, and, at the same time, an accurate student of the habits and tastes of the reading public, I am enabled to say, with a feeling next to certainty, that the plan can only end in something very unpleasant. At all events, his Majesty should get out of it; it is nonsense to say or suppose that any steps have been taken which, in such a matter, can or ought to be considered as

irrevocable. The fact is, that nobody knows as yet how far the matter has gone beyond the *projet* of some well-meaning but misjudging persons, and the whole thing is asleep and forgotten so far as the public is concerned. The Spanish proverb says, 'God help me from my friends, and I will keep myself from my enemies;' and there is much sense in it, for the zeal of misjudging adherents often contrives, as in the present case, to turn to matter of reproach the noblest feelings on the part of a sovereign.

"Let men of letters fight their own way with the public, and let his Majesty, according as his own excellent taste and liberality dictate, honour with his patronage, expressed in the manner fitted to their studies and habits, those who are able to distinguish themselves, and alleviate by his bounty the distresses of such as, with acknowledged merit, may yet have been unfortunate in procuring independence. The immediate and direct favour of the Sovereign is worth the patronage of ten thousand societies. But your Lordship knows how to set all this in a better light than I can, and I would not wish the cause of letters in better hands.

"I am now in a scene changed as completely as possible from those in which I had the great pleasure of meeting your Lordship lately, riding through the moors on a pony, instead of traversing the streets in a carriage, and drinking whisky-toddy with mine honest neighbours, instead of Champagne and Burgundy. I have gained, however, in point of exact political information; for I find we know upon Tweedside with much greater accuracy what is done and intended in the Cabinet than ever I could learn when living with the Ministers five days in the week. Mine honest Teviotdale friends, whom I left in a high Queen-fever, are now beginning to be somewhat ashamed of themselves, and

to make as great advances towards retracting their opinion as they are ever known to do, which amounts to this: 'God judge me, Sir W——, the King's no been so dooms far wrong after a' in yon Queen's job like;' which, being interpreted, signifies, 'We will fight for the King to the death.' I do not know how it was in other places; but I never saw so sudden and violent a delusion possess the minds of men in my life, even those of sensible, steady, well-intentioned fellows, that would fight knee-deep against the Radicals. It is well over, thank God.

"My best compliments attend the ladies. I ever am, my dear Lord, your truly obliged and faithful humble servant, WALTER SCOTT."

I have thought it right to insert the preceding letter, because it indicates with sufficient distinctness what Scott's opinions always were as to a subject on which, from his experience and position, he must have reflected very seriously. In how far the results of the establishment of the Royal Society of Literature have tended to confirm or to weaken the weight of his authority on these matters, I do not presume to have formed any judgment. He received, about the same time, a volume of poetry, by Allan Cunningham, which included the drama of Sir Marmaduke Maxwell; and I am happy to quote his letter of acknowledgment to that high-spirited and independent author in the same page with the foregoing monition to the dispensers of patronage.

*To Mr Allan Cunningham, Eccleston Street, Pimlico.*

"Abbotsford, 27th April.

"Dear Allan,

"Accept my kind thanks for your little modest volume, received two days since. I was acquainted with

most of the pieces, and yet I perused them all with renewed pleasure, and especially my old friend Sir Marmaduke with his new face, and by assistance of an April sun, which is at length, after many a rough blast, beginning to smile on us. The drama has, in my conception, more poetical conception and poetical expression in it than most of our modern compositions. Perhaps, indeed, it occasionally sins even in the richness of poetical expression; for the language of passion, though bold and figurative, is brief and concise at the same time. But what would, in acting, be a more serious objection, is the complicated nature of the plot, which is very obscure. I hope you will make another dramatic attempt; and, in that case, I would strongly recommend that you should previously make a model or skeleton of your incidents, dividing them regularly into scenes and acts, so as to insure the dependence of one circumstance upon another, and the simplicity and union of your whole story. The common class of readers, and more especially of spectators, are thick-sculled enough, and can hardly comprehend what they see and hear, unless they are hemmed in, and guided to the sense at every turn.

"The unities of time and place have always appeared to me fopperies, as far as they require close observance of the French rules. Still, the nearer you can come to them, it is always, no doubt, the better, because your action will be more probable. But the unity of action—I mean that continuity which unites every scene with the other, and makes the catastrophe the natural and probable result of all that has gone before—seems to me a critical rule which cannot safely be dispensed with. Without such a regular deduction of incident men's attention becomes distracted, and the most beautiful language, if at all listened to, creates no interest, and is out of place. I would give, as an example, the sud-

denly entertained, and as sūddenly abandoned, jealousy of Sir Marmaduke, p. 85, as a useless excrescence in the action of the drama.

"I am very much unaccustomed to offer criticism, and when I do so, it is because I believe in my soul that I am endeavouring to pluck away the weeds which hide flowers well worthy of cultivation. In your case the richness of your language, and fertility of your imagination, are the snares against which I would warn you. If the one had been poor, and the other costive, I would never have made remarks which could never do good, while they only gave pain. Did you ever read Savage's beautiful poem of the Wanderer? If not, do so, and you will see the fault which, I think, attaches to Lord Maxwell—a want of distinct precision and intelligibility about the story, which counteracts, especially with ordinary readers, the effect of beautiful and forcible diction, poetical imagery, and animated description.

"All this freedom you will excuse, I know, on the part of one who has the truest respect for the manly independence of character which rests for its support on honest industry, instead of indulging the foolish fastidiousness formerly supposed to be essential to the poetical temperament, and which has induced some men of real talents to become coxcombs—some to become sots—some to plunge themselves into want—others into the equal miseries of dependence, merely because, forsooth, they were men of genius, and wise above the ordinary and, I say, the manly duties of human life.

'I'd rather be a kitten, and cry, Mew!'

than write the best poetry in the world on condition of laying aside common sense in the ordinary transactions and business of the world; and, therefore, dear Allan,

I wish much the better to the muse whom you meet by the fireside in your hours of leisure when you have played your part manfully through a day of labour. I should like to see her making those hours also a little profitable. Perhaps something of the dramatic romance, if you could hit on a good subject, and combine the scenes well, might answer. A beautiful thing with appropriate music, scenes, &c. might be woven out of the Mermaid of Galloway.

"When there is any chance of Mr Chantrey coming this way, I hope you will let me know; and if you come with him, so much the better. I like him as much for his manners as for his genius.

'He is a man without a clagg;
His heart is frank without a flaw.'

"This is a horrible long letter for so vile a correspondent as I am. Once more, my best thanks for the little volume, and believe me yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

I now return to Sir Walter's correspondence with the Cornet at Cappoquin.

*To Walter Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars.*

"Abbotsford, April 21, 1821.

"My Dear Walter,

". . . . A democrat in any situation is but a silly sort of fellow, but a democratical soldier is worse than an ordinary traitor by ten thousand degrees, as he forgets his military honour, and is faithless to the master whose bread he eats. Three distinguished heroes of this class have arisen in my time, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Colonel Despard, and Captain Thistlewood, and, with the contempt and abhorrence of all men, they died

the death of infamy and guilt. If a man of honour is unhappy enough to entertain opinions inconsistent with the service in which he finds himself, it is his duty at once to resign his commission; in acting otherwise he disgraces himself for ever. . . . . The reports are very strange, also, with respect to the private conduct of certain officers. . . . . Gentlemen maintain their characters even in following their most licentious pleasures, otherwise they resemble the very scavengers in the streets. . . . . I had written you a long letter on other subjects, but these circumstances have altered my plans, as well as given me great uneasiness on account of the effects which the society you have been keeping may have had on your principles, both political and moral. Be very frank with me on this subject. I have a title to expect perfect sincerity, having always treated you with openness on my part.

"Pray write immediately, and at length.—I remain your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

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*To the Same.*

"Abbotsford, April 28, 1821.

"Dear Walter,

". . . . The great point in the meanwhile is to acquire such preliminary information as may render you qualified to profit by Sandhurst when you get thither. Amongst my acquaintance the men of greatest information have been those who seemed but indifferently situated for the acquisition of it, but who exerted themselves in proportion to the infrequency of their opportunities.

"The noble Captain Ferguson was married on Monday last. I was present at the bridal, and I assure you the like hath not been seen since the days of Lesmahago.

Like his prototype, the Captain advanced in a jaunty military step, with a kind of leer on his face that seemed to quiz the whole affair. You should write to your brother sportsman and soldier, and wish the veteran joy of his entrance into the band of Benedicts. Odd enough that I should christen a grandchild and attend the wedding of a contemporary within two days of each other. I have sent John of Skye, with Tom, and all the rabblement which they can collect, to play the pipes, shout, and fire guns below the Captain's windows this morning; and I am just going over to hover about on my pony, and witness their reception. The happy pair returned to Huntly Burn on Saturday; but yesterday being Sunday, we permitted them to enjoy their pillows in quiet. This morning they must not expect to get off so well. Pray write soon, and give me the history of your still-huntings, &c.—Ever yours affectionately,

W. SCOTT."

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*To Charles Scott, Esq., care of the Rev. Mr Williams, Lampeter.*

"Abbotsford, 9th May, 1821.

"My dear Charles,

"I am glad to find, by your letter, just received, that you are reading Tacitus with some relish. His style is rather quaint and enigmatical, which makes it difficult to the student; but then his pages are filled with such admirable apothegms and maxims of political wisdom, as infer the deepest knowledge of human nature; and it is particularly necessary that any one who may have views as a public speaker should be master of his works, as there is neither ancient or modern who affords such a selection of admirable quotations. You should exercise yourself frequently in trying to make translations of the passages which most strike you, trying to invest

the sense of Tacitus in as good English as you can. This will answer the double purpose of making yourself familiar with the Latin author, and giving you the command of your own language, which no person will ever have who does not study English composition in early life . . . . . .

I conclude somewhat abruptly, having trees to cut, and saucy Tom watching me like a Calmuck with the axe in his hand.—Yours affectionately,

W. Scott."

*To Walter Scott, Esq. 18th Hussars, Cappoquin.*

"Abbotsford, 10th May, 1821.

"Dear Walter,

"I wrote yesterday, but I am induced immediately to answer your letter, because I think you expect from it an effect upon my mind rather different from what it produces. A man may be violent and outrageous in his liquor, but wine seldom makes a gentleman a blackguard, or instigates a loyal man to utter sedition. Wine unveils the passions and throws away restraint, but it does not create habits or opinions which did not previously exist in the mind. Besides, what sort of defence is this of intemperance? I suppose if a private commits riot, or is disobedient in his cups, his officers do not admit whisky to be an excuse. I have seen enough of that sort of society where habitual indulgence drowned at last every distinction between what is worthy and unworthy, and I have seen young men with the fairest prospects turn out degraded miserable outcasts before their life was half spent, merely from soaking and sotting, and the bad habits these naturally lead to. You tell me * * * and * * * frequent good society and are well received in it, and I am very glad to hear this is the case. But such stories as these will soon occasion their seclusion from the *best*

company. There may remain, indeed, a large enough circle, where ladies, who are either desirous to fill their rooms or to marry their daughters, will continue to receive any young man in a showy uniform, however irregular in private life; but if these cannot be called *bad* company, they are certainly any thing but *very good*, and the facility of access makes the *entrée* of little consequence.

"I mentioned in my last that you were to continue in the 18th until the regiment went to India, and that I trusted you would get the step within the twelve months that the corps yet remains in Europe, which will make your exchange easier. But it is of far more importance that you learn to command yourself than that you should be raised higher in commanding others. It gives me pain to write to you in terms of censure, but *my duty* must be done, else I cannot expect you to do *yours*. All here are well and send love.—I am your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

*To the Same.*

"Edinburgh, 15th May, 1821.

"Dear Walter,

"I have your letter of May 6th, to which it is unnecessary to reply very particularly. I would only insinuate to you that the *lawyers* and *gossips* of Edinburgh, whom your military politeness handsomely classes together in writing to a lawyer, know and care as little about the 18th as they do about the 19th, 20th, or 21st, or any other regimental number which does not happen for the time to be at Piershill, or in the Castle. Do not fall into the error and pedantry of young military men, who, living much together, are apt to think themselves and their actions the subject of much talk and rumour among the public at large.—I will transcribe Fielding's account

of such a person, whom he met with on his voyage to Lisbon, which will give two or three hours' excellent amusement when you choose to peruse it:—

'In his conversation it is true there was something military enough, as it consisted chiefly of oaths, and of the great actions and wise sayings of Jack, Will, and Tom of *ours*, a phrase eternally in his mouth, and he seemed to conclude that it conveyed to all the officers such a degree of public notoriety and importance that it entitled him, like the head of a profession, or a first minister, to be the subject of conversation amongst those who had not the least personal acquaintance with him.'

Avoid this silly narrowness of mind, my dear boy, which only makes men be looked on in the world with ridicule and contempt. Lawyer and gossip as I may be, I suppose you will allow I have seen something of life in most of its varieties; as much at least as if I had been, like you, eighteen months in a cavalry regiment, or, like Beau Jackson, in Roderick Random, had cruized for half-a-year in the chops of the Channel. Now, I have never remarked any one, be he soldier, or divine, or lawyer, that was exclusively attached to the narrow habits of his own profession, but what such person became a great twaddle in good society, besides what is of much more importance, becoming narrow-minded and ignorant of all general information.

"That this letter may not be unacceptable in all its parts, I enclose your allowance without stopping any thing for the hackney. Take notice, however, my dear Walter, that this is to last you till midsummer. We came from Abbotsford yesterday, and left all well, excepting that Mr Laidlaw lost his youngest child, an infant, very unexpectedly. We found Sophia, Lockhart, and their child in good health, and all send love.—I remain your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

*To Walter Scott, Esq. 18th Hussars.*

" Edinburgh, 26th May, 1821.

" My dear Walter,

" I see you are of the mind of the irritable prophet Jonah, who persisted in maintaining 'he did well to be angry,' even when disputing with Omnipotence. I am aware that Sir David is considered as a severe and ill-tempered man; and I remember a story that, when report came to Europe that Tippoo's prisoners (of whom Baird was one) were chained together two and two, his mother said, 'God pity the poor lad that's chained to *our Davie.*' But though it may be very true that he may have acted towards you with caprice and severity, yet you are always to remember, 1st, That in becoming a soldier you have subjected yourself to the caprice and severity of superior officers, and have no comfort except in contemplating the prospect of commanding others in your turn. In the meanwhile, you have in most cases no remedy so useful as patience and submission. But, 2dly, As you seem disposed to admit that you yourselves have been partly to blame, I submit to you, that in turning the magnifying end of the telescope on Sir D's. faults, and the diminishing one on your own, you take the least useful mode of considering the matter. By studying *his* errors, you can acquire no knowledge that will be useful to you till you become Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, whereas, by reflecting on *your own*, Cornet Scott and his companions may reap some immediate moral advantage. Your fine of a dozen of claret, upon any one who shall introduce females into your mess in future, reminds me of the rule of a country club, that whoever 'behaved ungenteel,' should be fined in a pot of porter. Seriously, I think there was bad taste in the style of the forfeiture.

"I am well pleased with your map, which is very business-like. There was a great battle fought between the English and native Irish near the Blackwater, in which the former were defeated, and Bagenal the Knight-Marshal killed. Is there any remembrance of this upon the spot? There is a clergyman in Lismore, Mr John Graham*—originally, that is by descent, a borderer. He lately sent me a manuscript which I intend to publish, and I wrote to him enclosing a cheque on Coutts. I wish you could ascertain if he received my letter safe. You can call on him with my compliments. You need only say I was desirous to know if he had received a letter from me lately. The manuscript was written by a certain Mr Gwynne, a Welsh loyalist in the great Civil War, and afterwards an officer in the guards of Charles II. This will be an object for a ride to you.

"I presided last night at the dinner of the Celtic Society, 'all plaided and plumed in their tartan array,' and such jumping, skipping, and screaming you never saw. Chief Baron Shepherd dined with us, and was very much pleased with the extreme enthusiasm of the Gael when liberated from the thraldom of breeches. You were voted a member by acclamation, which will cost me a tartan dress for your long limbs when you come here. If the King takes Scotland in coming or going to Ireland (as has been talked of), I expect to get you leave to come over.—I remain your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—I beg you will not take it into your wise noddle that I will act either hastily or unadvisedly in

* This Mr Graham is known as the author of a "History of the Siege of Londonderry," "Annals of Ireland," and various political tracts. Sir Walter Scott published Gwynne's memoirs, with a preface, &c., in 1822.

your matters. I have been more successful in life than most people, and know well how much success depends, first upon desert, and then on knowledge of the *carte de pays.*"

The following letter begins with an allusion to a visit which Captain Ferguson, his bride, and his youngest sister, Miss Margaret Ferguson, had been paying at Ditton Park:—

*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c.*

"Edinburgh, 21st May, 1821.

"My dear Lord,

"I was much diverted with the account of Adam and Eve's visit to Ditton, which, with its surrrounding moat, might make no bad emblem of Eden, but for the absence of snakes and fiends. He is a very singular fellow; for, with all his humour and knowledge of the world, he by nature is a remarkably shy and modest man, and more afraid of the possibility of intrusion than would occur to any one who only sees him in the full stream of society. His sister Margaret is extremely like him in the turn of thought and of humour, and he has two others who are as great curiosities in their way. The eldest is a complete old maid, with all the gravity and shyness of the character, but not a grain of its bad humour or spleen; on the contrary, she is one of the kindest and most motherly creatures in the world. The second, Mary, was in her day a very pretty girl; but her person became deformed, and she has the sharpness of features with which that circumstance is sometimes attended. She rises very early in the morning, and roams over all my wild land in the neighbourhood, wearing the most complicated pile of handkerchiefs of different colours on her head, and a stick double her own

height in her hand, attended by two dogs, whose powers of yelping are truly terrific. With such garb and accompaniments, she has very nearly established the character in the neighbourhood of being *something no canny*— and the urchins of Melrose and Darnick are frightened from gathering hazle-nuts and cutting wands in my cleugh, by the fear of meeting *the daft lady*. With all this quizzicality, I do not believe there ever existed a family with so much mutual affection and such an overflow of benevolence to all around them, from men and women down to hedge-sparrows and lame ass-colts, more than one of which they have taken under their direct and special protection.

"I am sorry there should be occasion for caution in the case of little Duke Walter, but it is most lucky that the necessity is early and closely attended to. How many actual valetudinarians have outlived all their robust contemporaries, and attained the utmost verge of human life, without ever having enjoyed what is usually called high health. This is taking the very worst view of the case, and supposing the constitution habitually delicate. But how often has the strongest and best confirmed health succeeded to a delicate childhood— and such, I trust, will be the Duke's case. I cannot help thinking that this temporary recess from Eton may be made subservient to Walter's improvement in general literature, and particularly in historical knowledge. The habit of reading useful, and, at the same time, entertaining books of history, is often acquired during the retirement which delicate health in convalescence imposes on us. I remember we touched on this point at Ditton; and I think again, that though classical learning be the *Shibboleth* by which we judge, generally speaking, of the proficiency of the youthful scholar, yet, when this has been too exclusively and

pedantically impressed on his mind as the one thing needful, he very often finds he has entirely a new course of study to commence just at the time when life is opening all its busy or gay scenes before him, and when study of any kind becomes irksome.

"For this species of instruction I do not so much approve of tasks and set hours for serious reading, as of the plan of endeavouring to give a taste for history to the youths themselves, and suffering them to gratify it in their own way, and at their own time. For this reason I would not be very scrupulous what books they began with, or whether they began at the middle or end. The knowledge which we acquire of free will and by spontaneous exertion, is like food eaten with appetite—it digests well, and benefits the system ten times more than the double cramming of an alderman. If a boy's attention can be drawn in conversation to any interesting point of history, and the book is pointed out to him where he will find the particulars conveyed in a lively manner, he reads the passage with so much pleasure that he very naturally recurs to the book at the first unoccupied moment to try if he cannot pick more amusement out of it; and when once a lad gets the spirit of information, he goes on himself with little trouble but that of selecting for him the best and most agreeable books. I think Walter has naturally some turn for history and historical anecdote, and would be disposed to read as much as could be wished in that most useful line of knowledge;—for in the eminent situation he is destined to by his birth, acquaintance with the history and institutions of his country, and her relative position with respect to others, is a *sine qua non* to his discharging its duties with propriety. All this is extremely like prosing, so I will harp on that string no longer.

"Kind compliments to all at Ditton; you say nothing of your own rheumatism. I am here for the session, unless the wind should blow me south to see the coronation, and I think 800 miles rather a long journey to see a show.

I am always, my dear Lord,

Yours, very affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

## CHAPTER IV.

ILLNESS AND DEATH OF JOHN BALLANTYNE—EXTRACT FROM HIS POCKETBOOK—LETTERS FROM BLAIR-ADAM—CASTLE-CAMPBELL—SIR SAMUEL SHEPHERD—"BAILIE MACKAY," &c.—CORONATION OF GEORGE IV.—CORRESPONDENCE WITH JAMES HOGG AND LORD SIDMOUTH—LETTER ON THE CORONATION—ANECDOTES—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM'S MEMORANDA—COMPLETION OF CHANTREY'S BUST—

### 1821.

On the 4th of June, Scott being then on one of his short Sessional visits to Abbotsford, received the painful intelligence that his friend John Ballantyne's maladies had begun to assume an aspect of serious and even immediate danger. The elder brother made the communication in these terms:—

*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart. of Abbotsford, Melrose.*

"Edinburgh, Sunday, 3d June, 1821.

"Dear Sir,

"I have this morning had a most heart-breaking letter from poor John, from which the following is an extract. You will judge how it has affected me, who, with all his peculiarities of temper, love him very much. He says—

'A spitting of blood has commenced, and you may guess the situation into which I am plunged. We are all accustomed to consider death as certainly inevitable; but his obvious approach is assuredly the most detestable

and abhorrent feeling to which human nature can be subject.'

"This is truly doleful. There is something in it more absolutely bitter to my heart than what I have otherwise suffered. I look back to my mother's peaceful rest, and to my infant's blessedness—if life be not the extinguishable worthless spark which I cannot think it—but here, cut off in the very middle of life, with good means and strong powers of enjoying it, and nothing but reluctance and repining at the close—I say the truth when I say that I would joyfully part with my right arm, to avert the approaching result. Pardon this, dear sir; my heart and soul are heavy within me.

With the deepest respect and gratitude,

J. B."

At the date of this letter, the invalid was in Roxburghshire; but he came to Edinburgh a day or two afterwards, and died there on the 16th of the same month. I accompanied Sir Walter when one of their last interviews took place, and John's death-bed was a thing not to be forgotten. We sat by him for perhaps an hour, and I think half that space was occupied with his predictions of a speedy end, and details of his last will, which he had just been executing, and which lay on his coverlid; the other half being given, five minutes or so at a time, to questions and remarks, which intimated that the hope of life was still flickering before him—nay, that his interest in all its concerns remained eager. The proof-sheets of a volume of his Novelist's Library lay also by his pillow; and he passed from them to his will, and then back to them, as by jerks and starts the unwonted veil of gloom closed upon his imagination, or was withdrawn again. He had, as he said, left his great friend and patron L.2000 towards the completion of the

new Library at Abbotsford—and the spirit of the auctioneer virtuoso flashed up as he began to describe what would, he thought, be the best style and arrangement of the book-shelves. He was interrupted by an agony of asthma, which left him with hardly any signs of life; and ultimately he did expire in a fit of the same kind. Scott was visibly and profoundly shaken by this scene and its sequel. As we stood together a few days afterwards, while they were smoothing the turf over John's remains in the Canongate Churchyard, the heavens, which had been dark and slaty, cleared up suddenly, and the midsummer sun shone forth in his strength. Scott, ever awake to the "skiey influences," cast his eye along the overhanging line of the Calton Hill, with its gleaming walls and towers, and then turning to the grave again, "I feel," he whispered in my ear, "I feel as if there would be less sunshine for me from this day forth."

As we walked homewards, Scott told me, among other favourable *traits* of his friend, one little story which I must not omit. He remarked one day to a poor student of divinity attending his auction, that he looked as if he were in bad health. The young man assented with a sigh. "Come," said Ballantyne, "I think I ken the secret of a sort of draft that would relieve you—particularly," he added, handing him a cheque for L.5 or L.10—"particularly, my dear, if taken upon an empty stomach."

John died in his elder brother's house in St John Street; a circumstance which it gives me pleasure to record, as it confirms the impression of their affectionate feelings towards each other at this time, which the reader must have derived from James's letter to Scott last quoted. Their confidence and cordiality had undergone considerable interruption in the latter part of John's life; but the close was in all respects fraternal.

A year and half before John's exit, namely, on the

last day of 1819, he happened to lay his hand on an old pocketbook, which roused his reflections, and he filled two or three of its pages with a brief summary of the most active part of his life, which I think it due to his character, as well as Sir Walter Scott's, to transcribe in this place.

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"31st Dec. 1819. In moving a bed from the fire-place to-day up stairs, I found an old memorandum-book, which enables me to trace the following recollections of *this day*, the last of the year.

"1801. A shopkeeper in Kelso; at this period my difficulties had not begun in business; was well, happy, and 27 years old; new then in a connexion which afterwards gave me great pain, but can never be forgotten.

"1802. 28 old: In Kelso as before—could scarcely be happier—hunted, shot, kept ********'s company, and neglected business, the fruits whereof I soon found.

"1803. 29: Still fortunate, and happy from same cause. James in Edinburgh thriving as a printer. When I was ennuied at home, visited him. Business neglected every way.

"1804. 30: Material change; getting into difficulties; all wrong, and changes in every way approaching.

"1805. 31: All consummated; health miserable all summer, and * * * designated in an erased mem., *the scoundrel.* I yet recollect the cause—can I ever forget it? My furniture, goods, &c. sold at Kelso, previous to my going to Edinburgh to become my brother's clerk; whither I *did* go, for which God be praised eternally, on Friday, 3d January, 1806, on L.200 a-year. My effects at Kelso, with labour, paid my debts, and left me pennyless.

"From this period till 1808. 34: I continued in this situation—then the scheme of a bookselling concern in Hanover Street was adopted, which I was to manage; it was L.300 a-year, and one-fourth of the profits besides.

"1809. 35: Already the business in Hanover Street getting into difficulty, from our ignorance of its nature, and most extravagant and foolish advances from its funds to the printing concern. I ought to have resisted this, but I was thoughtless, although not young, or rather reckless, and lived on as long as I could make ends meet.

"1810. 36: Bills increasing—the destructive system of accommodations adopted.

"1811. 37: Bills increased to a most fearful degree. Sir Wm. Forbes and Co. shut their account. No bank would discount with us, and every thing leading to irretrievable failure.

"1812. 38: The first partner stepped in, at a crisis so tremendous, that it yet shakes my soul to think of it. By the most consummate wisdom, and resolution, and unheard-of exertions, he put things in a train that finally (so early as 1817) paid even himself (who ultimately became the sole creditor of the house) *in full*, with a balance of a thousand pounds.

"1813. 39: In business as a literary auctioneer in Prince's Street; from which period to the present I have got gradually forward, both in that line and as third of a partner of the works of the Author of Waverley, so that I am now, at 45, worth about (I owe L.2000) L.5000, with, however, alas! many changes—my strong constitution much broken; my father and mother dead, and James estranged—the chief enjoyment and glory of my life being the possession of the friendship and confidence of the greatest of men."

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In communicating John's death to the Cornet, Sir Walter says, "I have had a very great loss in poor John Ballantyne, who is gone, after a long illness. He persisted to the very last in endeavouring to take exercise, in which he was often imprudent, and was up and dressed the very morning before his death. In his will the grateful creature has left me a legacy of L.2000, life-rented, however, by his wife; and the rest of his little fortune goes betwixt his two brothers. I shall miss him very much, both in business, and as an easy and lively companion, who was eternally active and obliging in whatever I had to do."

I am sorry to take leave of John Ballantyne with the remark, that his last will was a document of the same class with too many of his *states* and *calendars*. So far from having L.2000 to bequeath to Sir Walter, he died as he had lived, ignorant of the situation of his affairs, and deep in debt.

The two following letters, written at Blair-Adam, where the Club were, as usual, assembled for the dog-days, have been selected from among several which Scott at this time addressed to his friends in the South, with the view of promoting Mr Mackay's success in his *debut* on the London boards as Bailie Jarvie.

"*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

"The immediate motive of my writing to you, my dearest friend, is to make Mrs Agnes and you aware that a Scots performer, called Mackay, is going up to London to play Bailie Nicol Jarvie for a single night at Covent Garden, and to beg you of all dear loves to go and see him; for, taking him in that single character, I am not sure I ever saw any thing in my life possessing so much truth and comic effect at the same time: he is completely the personage of the drama, the purse-proud consequential magistrate, humane and irritable in the same moment, and the true Scotsman in every turn of thought and action: his variety of feelings towards Rob Roy, whom he likes, and fears, and despises, and admires, and pities all at once, is exceedingly well expressed. In short, I never saw a part better sustained, certainly; I pray you to collect a party of Scotch friends to see it. I have written to Sotheby to the same purpose, but I doubt whether the exhibition will prove as satisfactory to those who do not know the original from which the resemblance is taken. I observe the English demand (as is natural), broad caricature in the depicting of national peculiarities: they did so as to the Irish till Jack Johnstone taught them better, and at first I should fear Mackay's reality will seem less ludicrous than Liston's humorous extravagances. So let it not be said that a dramatic genius of Scotland wanted the countenance and protection of Joanna Baillie: the Doctor

and Mrs Baillie will be much diverted if they go also, but somebody said to me that they were out of town. The man, I am told, is perfectly respectable in his life and habits, and consequently deserves encouragement every way. There is a great difference betwixt his *bailie* and all his other performances: one would think the part made for him, and him for the part—and yet I may do the poor fellow injustice, and what we here consider as a falling off may arise from our identifying Mackay so completely with the worthy Glasgow magistrate, that recollections of Nicol Jarvie intrude upon us at every corner, and mar the personification of any other part which he may represent for the time.

"I am here for a couple of days with our Chief Commissioner, late Willie Adam, and we had yesterday a delightful stroll to Castle Campbell, the Rumbling Brig, Cauldron Linns, &c: the scenes are most romantic, and I know not by what fatality it has been, that living within a step of them, I never visited any of them before. We had Sir Samuel Shepherd with us, a most delightful person, but with too much English fidgetiness about him for crags and precipices,—perpetually afraid that rocks would give way under his weight which had over-brow'd the torrent for ages, and that good well-rooted trees, moored so as to resist ten thousand tempests, would fall because he grasped one of their branches: he must certainly be a firm believer in the simile of the lover of your native land, who complains—

> 'I leant my back unto an aik,
> I thought it was a trusty tree,
> But first it bow'd and then it brake,' &c. &c. &c.

Certes these Southrons lack much the habits of the wood and wilderness, for here is a man of taste and genius, a fine scholar and a most interesting companion, haunted with fears that would be entertained by no shop-

keeper from the Luckenbooths or the Saut Market. A sort of *Cockneyism* of one kind or another pervades their men of professional habits, whereas every Scotchman, with very few exceptions, holds country exercises of all kinds to be part of his nature, and is ready to become a traveller or even a soldier on the slightest possible notice. The habits of the moorfowl shooting, salmon-fishing, and so forth, may keep this much up among the gentry, a name which our pride and pedigree extend so much wider than in England; and it is worth notice that these amusements being cheap and tolerably easy come at by all the petty dunnywassels, have a more general influence on the national character than fox-hunting, which is confined to those who can mount and keep a horse worth at least 100 guineas. But still this hardly explains the general and wide difference betwixt the countries in this particular. Happen how it will, the advantage is much in favour of Scotland: it is true that it contributes to prevent our producing such very accomplished lawyers, divines, or artisans* as when the whole mind is bent with undivided attention upon attaining one branch of knowledge,—but it gives a strong and muscular character to the people in general, and saves men from all sorts of causeless fears and flutterings of the heart, which give quite as much misery as if there were real cause for en-

* The great engineer, James Watt of Birmingham—in whose talk Scott took much delight—told him, that though hundreds probably of his northern countrymen had sought employment at his establishment, he never could get one of them to become a first-rate artisan. "Many of them," said he, "were too good for that, and rose to be valuable clerks and book-keepers; but those incapable of this sort of advancement had always the same insuperable aversion to toiling so long at any one point of mechanism as to gain the highest wages among the workmen." I have no doubt Sir Walter was thinking of Mr Watt's remark when he wrote the sentence in the text.

tertaining apprehension. This is not furiously to the purpose of my letter, which, after recommending Monsieur Mackay, was to tell you that we are all well and happy. Sophia is getting stout and pretty, and is one of the wisest and most important little mammas that can be seen any where. Her bower is *bigged in gude green wood*, and we went last Saturday in a body to enjoy it, and to consult about furniture, and we have got the road stopt which led up the hill, so it is now quite solitary, and approached through a grove of trees, actual well grown trees, not Lilliputian forests like those of Abbotsford. The season is dreadfully backward. Our ashes and oaks are not yet in leaf, and will not be, I think, in any thing like full foliage this year, such is the rigour of the east winds.—Always, my dear and much respected friend, most affectionately yours,

W. SCOTT.

"Blair-Adam, 11 June, 1821,
In full sight of Lochleven.

"P. S.—Pray read, or have read to you by Mrs Agnes, the *Annals of the Parish*. Mr Galt wrote the worst tragedies ever seen, and has now written a most excellent novel, if it can be called so."

*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. London.*

"Blair-Adam, June 11, 1821.

"My dear Lord,

"There is a man going up from Edinburgh to play one night at Covent Garden, whom, as having the very unusual power of presenting on the stage a complete Scotsman, I am very desirous you should see. He plays Bailie Nicol Jarvie in Rob Roy, but with a degree of national truth and understanding, which makes the part equal to any thing I have ever seen on the stage, and I have seen all the best come-

dians for these forty years. I wish much, if you continue in town till he comes up, that you would get into some private box and take a look of him. Sincerely, it is a real treat—the English will not enjoy it, for it is not broad enough, or sufficiently caricatured for their apprehensions, but to a Scotsman it is inimitable, and you have the Glasgow Bailie before you, with all his bustling conceit and importance, his real benevolence, and his irritable habits. He will want in London a fellow who, in the character of the Highland turnkey, held the back-hand to him admirably well. I know how difficult it is for folks of condition to get to the theatre, but this is worth an exertion, and, besides, the poor man (who I understand is very respectable in private life) will be, to use an admirable simile (by which one of your father's farmers persuaded the Duke to go to hear his son, a probationer in divinity, preach his first sermon in the town of Ayr), *like a cow in a fremd loaning*, and glad of Scots countenance.

"I am glad the Duke's cold is better—his stomach will not be put to those trials which ours underwent in our youth, when deep drinking was the fashion. I hope he will always be aware, however, that his is not a strong one.

"Campbell's Lives of the Admirals is an admirable book, and I would advise your Lordship e'en to redeem your pledge to the Duke on some rainy day. You do not run the risk from the perusal which my poor mother apprehended. She always alleged it sent her eldest son to the navy, and did not see with indifference any of her younger olive branches engaged with Campbell except myself, who stood in no danger of the cockpit or quarter-deck. I would not swear for Lord John though. Your Lordship's tutor was just such a well-meaning person as mine, who used to take from me old Lindsay of Pits-

cottie, and set me down to get by heart Rollin's infernal list of the Shepherd Kings, whose hard names could have done no good to any one on earth, unless he had wished to raise the devil, and lacked language to conjure with.—Always, my dear Lord, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The coronation of George IV., preparations for which were (as has been seen) in active progress by March, 1820, had been deferred, in consequence of the unhappy affair of the Queen's Trial. The 19th of July, 1821, was now announced for this solemnity, and Sir Walter resolved to be among the spectators. It occurred to him that if the Ettrick Shepherd were to accompany him, and produce some memorial of the scene likely to catch the popular ear in Scotland, good service might thus be done to the cause of loyalty; but this was not his only consideration. Hogg had married a handsome and most estimable young woman, a good deal above his own original rank in life, the year before; and expecting with her a dowry of L.1000, he had forthwith revived the grand ambition of an earlier day, and become a candidate for an extensive farm on the Buccleuch estate, at a short distance from Altrive Lake. Various friends, supposing his worldly circumstances to be much improved, had supported his application, and Lord Montagu had received it in a manner for which the Shepherd's letters to Scott express much gratitude. Misfortune pursued the Shepherd—the unforeseen bankruptcy of his wife's father interrupted the stocking of the sheep walk; and the arable part of the new possession was sadly mismanaged by himself. Scott hoped that a visit to London, and a coronation poem, or pamphlet, might end in some pension or post that would relieve these difficulties, and he wrote to Hogg, urging him to come to Edinburgh, and

embark with him for the great city. Not doubting that this proposal would be eagerly accepted, he, when writing to Lord Sidmouth, to ask a place for himself in the Hall and Abbey of Westminster, mentioned that Hogg was to be his companion, and begged suitable accommodation for him also. Lord Sidmouth, being overwhelmed with business connected with the approaching pageant, answered by the pen of the Under-Secretary of State, Mr Hobhouse, that Sir Walter's wishes, both as to himself and the Shepherd, should be gratified, *provided* they would both dine with him the day after the coronation, in Richmond park, "where," says the letter before me, "his Lordship will invite the Duke of York and a few other Jacobites to meet you." All this being made known to the tenant of Mount-Benger, he wrote to Scott, as he says, 'with the tear in his eye,' to signify, that if he went to London, he must miss attending the great annual Border fair, held on St Boswell's Green, in Roxburghshire, on the 18th of every July; and that his absence from that meeting so soon after entering upon business as a store-farmer, would be considered by his new compeers as highly imprudent and discreditable. "In short," James concludes, "the thing is impossible. But as there is no man in his Majesty's dominions admires his great talents for government, and the energy and dignity of his administration so much as I do, I will write something at home, and endeavour to give it you before you start." The Shepherd probably expected that these pretty compliments would reach the royal ear; but however that may have been, his own Muse turned a deaf ear to him—at least I never heard of any thing that he wrote on this occasion.

Scott embarked without him, on board a new steamship called *the City of Edinburgh*, which, as he suggested to the master, ought rather to have been christened

*the New Reekie.* This vessel was that described and lauded in the following letter :—

*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c.*

"Edinburgh, July 1, 1821.

"My dear Lord,

"I write just now to thank you for your letter. I have been on board the steam-ship, and am so delighted with it, that I think I shall put myself aboard for the coronation. It runs at nine knots an hour (*me ipso teste*), against wind and tide, with a deck as long as a frigate's to walk upon, and to sleep on also, if you like, as I have always preferred a cloak and a mattrass to these crowded cabins. This reconciles the speed and certainty of the mail-coach with the ease and convenience of being on ship-board. So I really think I will run up to see the grandee show and run down again. I scorn to mention economy, though the expense is not one-fifth, and that is something in hard times, especially to me, who to choose, would always rather travel in a public conveyance, than with my domestic's good company in a po-chay.

"But now comes the news of news. I have been instigating the great Caledonian Boar, James Hogg, to undertake a similar trip—with the view of turning an honest penny, to help out his stocking, by writing some sort of Shepherd's Letters, or the like, to put the honest Scots bodies up to this whole affair. I am trying with Lord Sidmouth to get him a place among the newspaper gentry to see the ceremony. It is seriously worth while to get such a popular view of the whole, as he will probably hit off.

"I have another view for this poor fellow. You have heard of the Royal Literary Society, and how they propose to distribute solid pudding, *alias* pensions,

to men of genius. It is, I think, a very problematical matter, whether it will do the good which is intended; but if they do mean to select worthy objects of encouragement, I really know nobody that has a better or an equal claim to poor Hogg. Our friend Villiers takes a great charge of this matter, and good-naturedly forgave my stating to him a number of objections to the first concoction, which was to have been something resembling the French Academy. It has now been much modified. Perhaps there may be some means fallen upon, with your Lordship's assistance, of placing Hogg under Mr Villiers' view. I would have done so myself, but only, I have battled the point against the whole establishment so keenly, that it would be too bad to bring forward a protegé of my own to take the advantage of it. They intended at one time to give pensions of about L.100 a-year to thirty persons. I know not where they could find half-a-dozen with such pretensions as the Shepherd's.

"There will be risk of his being lost in London, or kidnapped by some of those ladies who open literary *menageries* for the reception of *lions*. I should like to see him at a rout of blue-stockings. I intend to recommend him to the protection of John Murray the bookseller; and I hope he will come equipped with plaid, kent, and colley.*

"I wish to heaven Lord Melville would either keep the Admiralty, or in Hogg's phrase—

> ——— 'O I would eagerly press him
> The keys of the *east* to require,'—

* *Kent* is the shepherd's staff—*Colley* his dog. Scott alludes to the old song of the *Lea Rig*—

"Nae herds wi' kent and colley there," &c.

for truly the Board of Control is the Corn Chest for Scotland, where we poor gentry must send our younger sons, as we send our black cattle to the south.

Ever most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

From London, on the day after the coronation, Sir Walter addressed a letter, descriptive of the ceremonial, to his friend James Ballantyne, who published it in his newspaper. It has been since reprinted—but not in any collection of Scott's own writings; and I therefore insert it here. It will probably possess considerable interest for the student of English history and manners in future times; for the coronation of George the Fourth's successor was conducted on a vastly inferior scale of splendour and expense—and the precedent of curtailment in any such matters is now seldom neglected.

*To the Editor of the Edinburgh Weekly Journal.*

"London, July 20th, 1821.

"Sir,

"I refer you to the daily papers for the details of the great National Solemnity which we witnessed yesterday, and will hold my promise absolved by sending a few general remarks upon what I saw, with surprise amounting to astonishment, and which I shall never forget. It is, indeed, impossible to conceive a ceremony more august and imposing in all its parts, and more calculated to make the deepest impression both on the eye and on the feelings. The most minute attention must have been bestowed to arrange all the subordinate parts in harmony with the rest; so that, amongst so much antiquated ceremonial, imposing singular dresses, duties, and characters

upon persons accustomed to move in the ordinary routine of society, nothing occurred either awkward or ludicrous which could mar the general effect of the solemnity. Considering that it is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, I own I consider it as surprising that the whole ceremonial of the day should have passed away without the slightest circumstance which could derange the general tone of solemn feeling which was suited to the occasion.

"You must have heard a full account of the only disagreeable event of the day. I mean the attempt of the misguided lady, who has lately furnished so many topics of discussion, to intrude herself upon a ceremonial, where, not being in her proper place, to be present in any other must have been voluntary degradation. That matter is a fire of straw which has now burnt to the very embers, and those who try to blow it into life again, will only blacken their hands and noses, like mischievous children dabbling among the ashes of a bonfire. It seems singular, that being determined to be present at all hazards, this unfortunate personage should not have procured a Peer's ticket, which, I presume, would have insured her admittance. I willingly pass to pleasanter matters.

"The effect of the scene in the Abbey was beyond measure magnificent. Imagine long galleries stretched among the aisles of that venerable and august pile—those which rise above the altar pealing back their echoes to a full and magnificent choir of music—those which occupied the sides filled even to crowding with all that Britain has of beautiful and distinguished, and the cross-gallery most appropriately occupied by the Westminster schoolboys, in their white surplices, many of whom might on that day receive impressions never to be lost

during the rest of their lives. Imagine this, I say, and then add the spectacle upon the floor—the altar surrounded by the Fathers of the Church—the King encircled by the Nobility of the land and the Counsellors of his throne, and by warriors, wearing the honoured marks of distinction bought by many a glorious danger—add to this the rich spectacle of the aisles crowded with waving plumage, and coronets, and caps of honour, and the sun, which brightened and saddened as if on purpose, now beaming in full lustre on the rich and varied assemblage, and now darting a solitary ray, which catched, as it passed, the glittering folds of a banner, or the edge of a group of battle-axes or partizans, and then rested full on some fair form, 'the Cynosure of neighbouring eyes,' whose circlet of diamonds glistened under its influence. Imagine all this, and then tell me if I have made my journey of four hundred miles to little purpose. I do not love your *cui bono* men, and therefore I will not be pleased if you ask me in the damping tone of sullen philosophy, what good all this has done the spectators? If we restrict life to its real animal wants and necessities, we shall indeed be satisfied with 'food, clothes, and fire;' but Divine Providence, who widened our sources of enjoyment beyond those of the animal creation, never meant that we should bound our wishes within such narrow limits; and I shrewdly suspect that those *non est tanti* gentlefolks only depreciate the natural and unaffected pleasure which men like me receive from sights of splendour and sounds of harmony, either because they would seem wiser than their simple neighbours at the expense of being less happy, or because the mere pleasure of the sight and sound is connected with associations of a deeper kind, to which they are unwilling to yield themselves.

"Leaving these gentlemen to enjoy their own wisdom,

I still more pity those, if there be any, who (being unable to detect a peg on which to hang a laugh) sneer coldly at this solemn festival, and are rather disposed to dwell on the expense which attends it, than on the generous feelings which it ought to awaken. The expense, so far as it is national, has gone directly and instantly to the encouragement of the British manufacturer and mechanic; and so far as it is personal to the persons of rank attendant upon the Coronation, it operates as a tax upon wealth and consideration for the benefit of poverty and industry; a tax willingly paid by the one class, and not the less acceptable to the other, because it adds a happy holiday to the monotony of a life of labour.

"But there were better things to reward my pilgrimage than the mere pleasures of the eye and ear; for it was impossible, without the deepest veneration, to behold the voluntary and solemn interchange of vows betwixt the King and his assembled People, whilst he, on the one hand, called God Almighty to witness his resolution to maintain their laws and privileges, whilst they called, at the same moment, on the Divine Being, to bear witness that they accepted him for their liege Sovereign, and pledged to him their love and their duty. I cannot describe to you the effect produced by the solemn, yet strange mixture of the words of Scripture, with the shouts and acclamations of the assembled multitude, as they answered to the voice of the Prelate who demanded of them whether they acknowledged as their Monarch the Prince who claimed the sovereignty in their presence. It was peculiarly delightful to see the King receive from the royal brethren, but in particular from the Duke of York, the fraternal kiss in which they acknowledged their sovereign. There was an honest tenderness, an affectionate and sincere reverence in the

embrace interchanged betwixt the Duke of York and his Majesty that approached almost to a caress, and impressed all present with the electrical conviction, that the nearest to the throne in blood was the nearest also in affection. I never heard plaudits given more from the heart than those that were thundered upon the royal brethren when they were thus pressed to each other's bosoms,—it was an emotion of natural kindness, which, bursting out amidst ceremonial grandeur, found an answer in every British bosom. The King seemed much affected at this and one or two other parts of the ceremonial, even so much so, as to excite some alarm among those who saw him as nearly as I did. He completely recovered himself, however, and bore (generally speaking) the fatigue of the day very well. I learn from one near his person, that he roused himself with great energy, even when most oppressed with heat and fatigue, when any of the more interesting parts of the ceremony were to be performed, or when any thing occurred which excited his personal and immediate attention. When presiding at the banquet amid the long line of his Nobles, he looked 'every inch a King;' and nothing could exceed the grace with which he accepted and returned the various acts of homage rendered to him in the course of that long day.

"It was also a very gratifying spectacle to those who think like me, to behold the Duke of Devonshire and most of the distinguished Whig nobility assembled round the throne on this occasion; giving an open testimony that the differences of political opinions are only skin-deep wounds, which assume at times an angry appearance, but have no real effect on the wholesome constitution of the country.

"If you ask me to distinguish who bore him best, and appeared most to sustain the character we annex to the

assistants in such a solemnity, I have no hesitation to name Lord Londonderry, who, in the magnificent robes of the Garter, with the cap and high plume of the order, walked alone, and by his fine face, and majestic person, formed an adequate representative of the order of Edward III., the costume of which was worn by his Lordship only. The Duke of Wellington, with all his laurels, moved and looked deserving the baton, which was never grasped by so worthy a hand. The Marquis of Anglesea showed the most exquisite grace in managing his horse, notwithstanding the want of his limb, which he left at Waterloo. I never saw so fine a bridle-hand in my life, and I am rather a judge of 'noble horsemanship.' Lord Howard's horse was worse bitted than those of the two former noblemen, but not so much so as to derange the ceremony of retiring back out of the Hall.

"The Champion was performed (as of right) by young Dymocke, a fine-looking youth, but bearing, perhaps, a little too much the appearance of a maiden-knight to be the challenger of the world in a King's behalf. He threw down his gauntlet, however, with becoming manhood, and showed as much horsemanship as the crowd of knights and squires around him would permit to be exhibited. His armour was in good taste, but his shield was out of all propriety, being a round *rondache*, or Highland target, a defensive weapon, which it would have been impossible to use on horseback, instead of being a three-corner'd, or *heater-shield*, which in time of the tilt was suspended round the neck. Pardon this antiquarian scruple, which, you may believe, occurred to few but myself. On the whole, this striking part of the exhibition somewhat disappointed me, for I would have had the Champion less embarrassed by his assistants, and at liberty to put his horse on the *grand*

*pas*. And yet the young Lord of Scrivelsbaye looked and behaved extremely well.

"Returning to the subject of costume, I could not but admire what I had previously been disposed much to criticise,—I mean the fancy dress of the Privy-Councillors, which was of white and blue satin, with trunk-hose and mantles, after the fashion of Queen Elizabeth's time. Separately, so gay a garb had an odd effect on the persons of elderly or ill-made men; but when the whole was thrown into one general body, all these discrepancies disappeared, and you no more observed the particular manner or appearance of an individual than you do that of a soldier in the battalion which marches past you. The whole was so completely harmonized in actual colouring, as well as in association with the general mass of gay and gorgeous and antique dress which floated before the eye, that it was next to impossible to attend to the effect of individual figures. Yet a Scotsman will detect a Scotsman amongst the most crowded assemblage, and I must say that the Lord Justice-Clerk of Scotland showed to as great advantage in his robes of Privy-Councillor as any by whom that splendid dress was worn on this great occasion. The common Court-dress, used by the Privy-Councillors at the last coronation, must have had a poor effect in comparison of the present, which formed a gradation in the scale of gorgeous ornament, from the unwieldy splendour of the heralds, who glowed like huge masses of cloth of gold and silver, to the more chastened robes and ermine of the Peers. I must not forget the effect produced by the Peers placing their coronets on their heads, which was really august.

"The box assigned to the foreign Ambassadors presented a most brilliant effect, and was perfectly in a

blaze with diamonds. When the sunshine lighted on Prince Esterhazy, in particular, he glimmered like a galaxy. I cannot learn positively if he had on that renowned coat which has visited all the courts of Europe save ours, and is said to be worth L.100,000, or some such trifle, and which costs the Prince L.100 or two every time he puts it on, as he is sure to lose pearls to that amount. This was a hussar dress, but splendid in the last degree, perhaps too fine for good taste, at least it would have appeared so any where else. Beside the Prince sat a good-humoured lass, who seemed all eyes and ears (his daughter-in-law I believe), who wore as many diamonds as if they had been Bristol stones. An honest Persian was also a remarkable figure, from the dogged and imperturbable gravity with which he looked on the whole scene, without ever moving a limb or a muscle during the space of four hours. Like Sir Wilful Witwoud, I cannot find that your Persian is orthodox; for if he scorned every thing else, there was a Mahometan paradise extended on his right hand along the seats which were occupied by the Peeresses and their daughters, which the Prophet himself might have looked on with emotion. I have seldom seen so many elegant and beautiful girls as sat mingled among the noble matronage of the land; and the waving plumage of feathers, which made the universal head-dress, had the most appropriate effect in setting off their charms.

"I must not omit that the foreigners, who are apt to consider us as a nation *en frac*, and without the usual ceremonials of dress and distinction, were utterly astonished and delighted to see the revival of feudal dresses and feudal grandeur when the occasion demanded it, and that in a degree of splendour which they averred they had never seen paralleled in Europe.

"The duties of service at the Banquet, and of attend-

ance in general, was performed by pages drest very elegantly in Henri Quatre coats of scarlet, with gold lace, blue sashes, white silk hose, and white rosettes. There were also marshal's-men for keeping order, who wore a similar dress, but of blue, and having white sashes. Both departments were filled up almost entirely by young gentlemen, many of them of the very first condition, who took these menial characters to gain admission to the show. When I saw many of my young acquaintance thus attending upon their fathers and kinsmen, the Peers, Knights, and so forth, I could not help thinking of Crabbe's lines, with a little alteration :—

> 'Twas schooling pride to see the menial wait,
> Smile on his father and receive his plate.

It must be owned, however, that they proved but indifferent valets, and were very apt, like the clown in the pantomime, to eat the cheer they should have handed to their masters, and to play other *tours de page*, which reminded me of the caution of our proverb 'not to man yourself with your kin.' The Peers, for example, had only a cold collation, while the Aldermen of London feasted on venison and turtle; and similar errors necessarily befell others in the confusion of the evening. But these slight mistakes, which indeed were not known till afterwards, had not the slightest effect on the general grandeur of the scene.

"I did not see the procession between the Abbey and Hall. In the morning a few voices called, *Queen, Queen*, as Lord Londonderry passed, and even when the Sovereign appeared. But these were only signals for the loud and reiterated acclamations in which these tones of discontent were completely drowned. In the return, no one dissonant voice intimated the least dissent from the shouts of gratulation which poured from every quarter;

and certainly never Monarch received a more general welcome from his assembled subjects.

"You will have from others full accounts of the variety of entertainments provided for John Bull in the Parks, the River, in the Theatres, and elsewhere. Nothing was to be seen or heard but sounds of pleasure and festivity; and whoever saw the scene at any one spot, was convinced that the whole population was assembled there, while others found a similar concourse of revellers in every different point. It is computed that about FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE shared in the Festival in one way or another; and you may imagine the excellent disposition by which the people were animated, when I tell you, that, excepting a few windows broken by a small body-guard of ragamuffins, who were in immediate attendance on the Great Lady in the morning, not the slightest political violence occurred to disturb the general harmony—and that the assembled populace seemed to be universally actuated by the spirit of the day, loyalty, namely, and good humour. Nothing occurred to damp those happy dispositions; the weather was most propitious, and the arrangements so perfect, that no accident of any kind is reported as having taken place.—And so concluded the coronation of GEORGE IV., whom GOD long preserve. Those who witnessed it have seen a scene calculated to raise the country in their opinion, and to throw into the shade all scenes of similar magnificence, from the Field of the Cloth of Gold down to the present day.

I remain, your obedient servant,

AN EYE-WITNESS."

At the close of this brilliant scene, Scott received a mark of homage to his genius which delighted him not less than Laird Nippy's reverence for *the Sheriff's Knoll*,

and the Birmingham cutler's dear acquisition of his signature on a visiting ticket. Missing his carriage, he had to return home on foot from Westminster, after the banquet—that is to say, between two and three o'clock in the morning;—when he and a young gentleman his companion found themselves locked in the crowd, somewhere near Whitehall, and the bustle and tumult were such that his friend was afraid some accident might happen to the lame limb. A space for the dignitaries was kept clear at that point by the Scots Greys. Sir Walter addressed a serjeant of this celebrated regiment, begging to be allowed to pass by him into the open ground in the middle of the street. The man answered shortly that his orders were strict—that the thing was impossible. While he was endeavouring to persuade the serjeant to relent, some new wave of turbulence approached from behind, and his young companion exclaimed in a loud voice, "take care, Sir Walter Scott, take care!" The stalwart dragoon, on hearing the name, said, "What! Sir Walter Scott? He shall get through anyhow!" He then addressed the soldiers near him—"make room, men, for Sir Walter Scott, our illustrious countryman!" The men answered, "Sir Walter Scott!—God bless him!"—and he was in a moment within the guarded line of safety.

I shall now take another extract from the *memoranda*, with which I have been favoured by my friend Allan Cunningham. After the particulars formerly quoted about Scott's sitting to Chantrey in the spring of 1820, he proceeds as follows:—

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"I saw Sir Walter again, when he attended the coronation, in 1821. In the meantime his bust had been wrought in marble, and the sculptor desired to take the

advantage of his visit to communicate such touches of expression or lineament as the new material rendered necessary. This was done with a happiness of eye and hand almost magical: for five hours did the poet sit, or stand, or walk, while Chantrey's chisel was passed again and again over the marble, adding something at every touch.

"'Well, Allan,' he said, when he saw me at this last sitting, 'were you at the coronation? it was a splendid sight.' 'No, Sir Walter,' I answered,—'places were dear and ill to get: I am told it was a magnificent scene: but having seen the procession of King Crispin at Dumfries, I was satisfied.' I said this with a smile: Scott took it as I meant it, and laughed heartily. 'That's not a bit better than Hogg,' he said. 'He stood balancing the matter whether to go to the coronation or the fair of Saint Boswell—and the fair carried it.'

"During this conversation, Mr Bolton the engineer came in. Something like a cold acknowledgment passed between the poet and him. On his passing into an inner room, Scott said, 'I am afraid Mr Bolton has not forgot a little passage that once took place between us. We met in a public company, and in reply to the remark of some one, he said, "that's like the old saying,—in every corner of the world you will find a Scot, a rat, and a Newcastle grindstone." This touched my Scotch spirit, and I said, "Mr Bolton, you ought to have added, *and a Birmingham button.*" There was a laugh at this, and Mr Bolton replied, "we make something better in Birmingham than buttons—we make steam-engines, sir."

"'I like Bolton,' thus continued Sir Walter, 'he is a brave man, and who can dislike the brave?—He showed this on a remarkable occasion. He had engaged to coin for some foreign prince a large quantity of gold. This was found out by some desperadoes, who resolved to

rob the premises, and as a preliminary step tried to bribe the porter. The porter was an honest fellow,—he told Bolton that he was offered a hundred pounds to be blind and deaf next night. Take the money, was the answer, and I shall protect the place. Midnight came—the gates opened as if by magic, the interior doors, secured with patent locks, opened as of their own accord, and three men with dark lanterns entered and went straight to the gold. Bolton had prepared some flax steeped in turpentine—he dropt fire upon it, a sudden light filled all the place, and with his assistants he rushed forward on the robbers,—the leader saw in a moment he was betrayed, turned on the porter, and shooting him dead, burst through all obstruction, and with an ingot of gold in his hand, scaled the wall and escaped.'

" 'That is quite a romance in robbing,' I said, and I had nearly said more, for the cavern scene and death of Meg Merrilees rose in my mind,—perhaps the mind of Sir Walter was taking the direction of the Solway too, for he said, 'How long have you been from Nithsdale?' 'A dozen years.' 'Then you will remember it well. I was a visiter there in my youth; my brother was at Closeburn school, and there I found Creehope Linn, a scene ever present to my fancy. It is at once fearful and beautiful. The stream jumps down from the moorlands, saws its way into the free-stone rock of a hundred feet deep, and, in escaping to the plain, performs a thousand vagaries. In one part it has actually shaped out a little chapel,—the peasants call it the Sutors' Chair. There are sculptures on the sides of the linn too, not such as Mr Chantrey casts, but etchings scraped in with a knife perhaps, or a harrow-tooth.— Did you ever hear,' said Sir Walter, 'of Patrick Maxwell, who, taken prisoner by the king's troops, escaped from them on his way to Edinburgh, by flinging himself into that dreadful

linn on Moffat water, called the Douglasses Beef-tub?' 'Frequently,' I answered; 'the country abounds with anecdotes of those days; the popular feeling sympathizes with the poor Jacobites, and has recorded its sentiments in many a tale and many a verse.' 'The Ettrick Shepherd has collected not a few of those things,' said Scott, 'and I suppose many snatches of song may yet be found.' C. 'I have gathered many such things myself, Sir Walter, and as I still propose to make a collection of all Scottish songs of poetic merit, I shall work up many of my stray verses and curious anecdotes in the notes.' S. 'I am glad that you are about such a thing; any help which I can give you, you may command; ask me any questions, no matter how many, I shall answer them if I can. Don't be timid in your selection; our ancestors fought boldly, spoke boldly, and sang boldly too. I can help you to an old characteristic ditty not yet in print:

'There dwalt a man into the wast,
And O gin he was cruel,
For on his bridal night at e'en
He gat up and grat for gruel.
They brought to him a gude sheep's head,
A bason, and a towel,
Gar take thae whim-whams far frae me,
I winna want my gruel.'

"C. I never heard that verse before; the hero seems related to the bridegroom of Nithsdale—

'The bridegroom grat as the sun gade down,
The bridegroom grat as the sun gade down,
To ony man I'll gie a hunder marks sae free,
This night that will bed wi' a bride for me.'

"S. A cowardly loon enough. I know of many crumbs and fragments of verse which will be useful to your work; the Border was once peopled with poets, for

every one that could fight could make ballads, some of them of great power and pathos. Some such people as the minstrels were living less than a century ago.' C. 'I knew a man, the last of a race of district tale-tellers, who used to boast of the golden days of his youth, and say, that the world, with all its knowledge, was grown sixpence a day worse for him.' S. 'How was that? how did he make his living? by telling tales, or singing ballads?' C. 'By both: he had a devout tale for the old, and a merry song for the young; he was a sort of beggar.' S. 'Out upon thee, Allan, dost thou call that begging? Why, man, we make our bread by story-telling, and honest bread it is.'"

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I ought not to close this extract, without observing that Sir F. Chantrey presented the original bust, of which Mr Cunningham speaks, to Sir Walter himself; by whose remotest descendants it will undoubtedly be held in additional honour on that account. The poet had the further gratification of learning that three copies were executed in marble before the original quitted the studio: One for Windsor Castle—a second for Apsley House—and a third for the friendly sculptor's own private collection. The *legitimate* casts of this bust have since been multiplied beyond perhaps any example whatever. Mr Cunningham remembers not fewer than fifteen hundred of them (price four guineas each) being ordered *for exportation*—chiefly to the United States of America—within one year. Of the myriads, or rather millions, of inferior copies manufactured and distributed by unauthorized persons, it would be in vain to attempt any calculation.

## CHAPTER V.

### PUBLICATION OF MR ADOLPHUS'S LETTERS ON THE AUTHORSHIP OF WAVERLEY.
### 1821.

DURING Scott's visit to London, in July, 1821, there appeared a work which was read with eager curiosity and delight by the public—with much private diversion besides by his friends—and which he himself must have gone through with a very odd mixture of emotions. I allude to the volume entitled "Letters to Richard Heber, Esq., containing critical remarks on the series of novels beginning with Waverley, and an attempt to ascertain their author;" which was soon known to have been penned by Mr John Leicester Adolphus, a distinguished alumnus of the University then represented in Parliament by Sir Walter's early friend Heber. Previously to the publication of these Letters, the opinion that Scott was the author of Waverley had indeed become well settled in the English, to say nothing of the Scottish mind; a great variety of circumstances, external as well as internal, had by degrees co-operated to its general establishment: yet there were not wanting persons who still dissented, or at least affected to dissent from it. It was reserved for the enthusiastic industry, and admirable ingenuity of this juvenile academic, to set the question at rest, by an accumulation of critical evidence which no

sophistry could evade, and yet produced in a style of such high-bred delicacy, that it was impossible for the hitherto 'veiled prophet' to take the slightest offence with the hand that had for ever abolished his disguise. The only sceptical scruple that survived this exposition, was extinguished in due time by Scott's avowal of the *sole and unassisted* authorship of his novels; and now Mr Adolphus's Letters have shared the fate of other elaborate arguments, the thesis of which has ceased to be controverted. Hereafter, I am persuaded, his volume will be revived for its own sake;—but, in the meantime, regarding it merely as forming, by its original effect, an epoch in Scott's history, I think it my duty to mark my sense of its importance in that point of view, by transcribing the writer's own summary of its

"CONTENTS.

"LETTER I.—Introduction—General reasons for believing the novels to have been written by the author of Marmion.

"LETTER II.—Resemblance between the novelist and poet in their tastes, studies, and habits of life, as illustrated by their works—Both Scotchmen—Habitual residents in Edinburgh—Poets—Antiquaries—German and Spanish scholars—Equal in classical attainments—Deeply read in British history—Lawyers—Fond of field sports—Of dogs—Acquainted with most manly exercises—Lovers of military subjects—The novelist apparently not a soldier.

"LETTER III.—The novelist is, like the poet, a man of good society—His stories never betray forgetfulness of honourable principles, or ignorance of good manners—Spirited pictures of gentlemanly character—Colonel Mannering—Judicious treatment of elevated historical personages.—The novelist quotes and praises most contemporary poets, except the author of Marmion—Instances in which the poet has appeared to slight his own unacknowledged, but afterwards avowed productions.

"LETTER IV.—Comparison of the works themselves—All distinguished by good morals and good sense—The latter particularly shown in the management of character—Prose style—its general features—Plainness and facility—Grave banter—Manner of telling

a short story—Negligence—Scotticisms—Great propriety and correctness occasionally, and sometimes unusual sweetness.

"LETTER V.—Dialogue in the novels and poems—Neat colloquial turns in the former, such as cannot be expected in romantic poetry—Happy adaptation of dialogue to character, whether merely natural, or artificially modified, as by profession, local habits, &c. —Faults of dialogue, as connected with character of speakers— Quaintness of language and thought—Bookish air in conversation—Historical personages alluding to their own celebrated acts and sayings—Unsuccessful attempts at broad vulgarity—Beauties of composition peculiar to the dialogue—Terseness and spirit— —These qualities well displayed in quarrels; but not in scenes of polished raillery—Eloquence.

"LETTER VI.—The poetry of the author of Marmion generally characterised—His habits of composition and turn of mind, as a poet, compared with those of the novelist—Their descriptions simply conceived and composed, without abstruse and far-fetched circumstances or refined comments—Great advantage derived by both from accidental combinations of images, and the association of objects in the mind with persons, events, &c.—Distinctness and liveliness of effect in narrative and description—Narrative usually picturesque or dramatic, or both—Distinctness, &c. of effect, produced in various ways—Striking pictures of individuals—Their persons, dress, &c.—Descriptions sometimes too obviously picturesque—Subjects for painters—Effects of light frequently noticed and finely described—Both writers excel in grand and complicated scenes—Among detached and occasional ornaments, the similes particularly noticed—Their frequency and beauty—Similes and metaphors sometimes quaint and pursued too far.

"LETTER VII.—Stories of the two writers compared—These are generally connected with true history, and have their scene laid in a real place—Local peculiarities diligently attended to— Instances in which the novelist and poet have celebrated the same places—they frequently describe these as seen by a traveller (the hero, or some other principal personage) for the first time—Dramatic mode of relating story—Soliloquies—Some scenes degenerate into melodrame—Lyrical pieces introduced sometimes too theatrically—Comparative unimportance of heroes—Various causes of this fault—Heroes rejected by ladies, and marrying others whom they had before slighted—Personal struggle between a civilized and a barbarous hero—Characters resembling each other—Female por-

traits in general—Fathers and daughters—Characters in Paul's Letters—Wycliffe and Risingham—Glossin and Hatteraick—Other characters compared.—Long periods of time abrupfly passed over—Surprises, unexpected discoveries, &c.—These sometimes too forced and artificial—Frequent recourse to the marvellous—Dreams well described—Living persons mistaken for spectres—Deaths of Burley, Risingham, and Rashleigh.

"Letter VIII.—Comparison of particular passages—Descriptions—Miscellaneous thoughts—Instances, in which the two writers have resorted to the same sources of information, and borrowed the same incidents, &c.—Same authors quoted by both—the poet, like the novelist, fond of mentioning his contemporaries, whether as private friends or as men publicly distinguished—Author of Marmion never notices the Author of Waverley (see Letter III.)—Both delight in frequently introducing an antiquated or fantastic dialect—Peculiarities of expression common to both writers—Conclusion."

I wish I had space for extracting copious specimens of the felicity with which Mr Adolphus works out these various points of his problem. As it is I must be contented with a narrow selection—and I shall take two or three of the passages which seem to me to connect themselves most naturally with the main purpose of my own compilation.

"A thorough knowledge and statesmanlike understanding of the domestic history and politics of Britain at various and distant periods; a familiar acquaintance with the manners and prevailing spirit of former generations, and with the characters and habits of their most distinguished men, are of themselves no cheap or common attainments; and it is rare indeed to find them united with a strong original genius, and great brilliancy of imagination. We know, however, that the towering poet of Flodden-field is also the diligent editor of Swift and Dryden, of Lord Somers's Tracts, and of Sir Ralph Sadler's State Papers; that in these and other parts of his literary career he has necessarily plunged deep into the study of British history, biography, and antiquities, and that the talent and activity which he brought to these researches have been warmly seconded by the zeal and liberality of those who possessed the amplest and rarest sources of information. 'The muse found him,'

as he himself said long ago, 'engaged in the pursuit of historical and traditional antiquities, and the excursions which he has made in her company have been of a nature which increases his attachment to his original study.' Are we then to suppose, that another writer has combined the same powers of fancy with the same spirit of investigation, the same perseverance, and the same good fortune? and shall we not rather believe, that the labour employed in the illustration of Dryden has helped to fertilize the invention which produced Montrose and Old Mortality? . . . . .

"However it may militate against the supposition of his being a poet, I cannot suppress my opinion, that our novelist is a 'man of law.' He deals out the peculiar terms and phrases of that science (as practised in Scotland) with a freedom and confidence beyond the reach of any uninitiated person. If ever, in the progress of his narrative, a legal topic presents itself (which very frequently happens), he neither declines the subject, nor timidly slurs it over, but enters as largely and formally into all its technicalities, as if the case were actually 'before the fifteen.' The manners, humours, and professional *bavardage* of lawyers are sketched with all the ease and familiarity which result from habitual observation. In fact, the subject of law, which is a stumblingblock to others, is to the present writer a spot of repose; upon this theme he lounges and gossips, he is *discinctus et soleatus*, and, at times, almost forgets that when an author finds himself at home and perfectly at ease, he is in great danger of falling asleep.—If, then, my inferences are correct, the unknown writer who was just now proved to be an excellent poet, must also be pronounced a follower of the law: the combination is so unusual, at least on this side of the Tweed, that, as Juvenal says on a different occasion—

> ——————————— 'bimembri
> Hoc monstrum puero, vel mirandis sub aratro
> Piscibus inventis, et fœtæ comparo mulæ.'

Nature has indeed presented us with one such prodigy in the author of Marmion; and it is probable, that in the author of Waverley, we only see the same specimen under a different aspect; for, however sportive the goddess may be, she has too much wit and invention to wear out a frolic by many repetitions. . . . . .

"A striking characteristic of both writers is their ardent love of rural sports, and all manly and robust exercises.—But the importance given to the canine race in these works ought to be noted

as a characteristic feature by itself. I have seen some drawings by a Swiss artist, who was called the Raphael of cats; and either of the writers before us might, by a similar phrase, be called the Wilkie of dogs. Is it necessary to justify such a compliment by examples? Call Yarrow, or Lufra, or poor Fangs, Colonel Mannering's Plato, Henry Morton's Elphin, or Hobbie Elliot's Kilbuck, or Wolf of Avenel Castle:—see Fitz-James's hounds returning from the pursuit of the lost stag—

> 'Back limped with slow and crippled pace
> The sulky leaders of the chase'—

or swimming after the boat which carries their Master—

> 'With heads erect and whimpering cry
> The hounds behind their passage ply.'

See Captain Clutterbuck's dog *quizzing* him when he missed a bird, or the scene of 'mutual explanation and remonstrance' between 'the venerable patriarchs old Pepper and Mustard,' and Henry Bertram's rough terrier Wasp. If these instances are not sufficient, turn to the English blood-hound assailing the young Buccleuch—

> 'And hark! and hark! the deep-mouthed bark
> Comes nigher still and nigher;
> Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
> His tawny muzzle tracked the ground,
> And his red eye shot fire.
> Soon as the wildered child saw he,
> He flew at him right furiouslie. . . . .
> I ween you would have seen with joy
> The bearing of the gallant boy. . . . . .
> So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
> At cautious distance hoarsely bayed,
> But still in act to spring.'

Or Lord Ronald's deer-hounds, in the haunted forest of Glenfinlas—

> 'Within an hour return'd each hound;
> In rush'd the rousers of the deer;
> They howl'd in melancholy sound,
> Then closely couch beside the seer. . . . . .
> Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
> And sudden cease their moaning howl;
> Close press'd to Moy, they mark their fears
> By shivering limbs, and stifled growl.
> Untouch'd the harp began to ring,
> As softly, slowly, oped the door,' &c.

Or look at Cedric the Saxon, in his antique hall, attended by his greyhounds and slowhounds, and the terriers which 'waited with impatience the arrival of the supper; but with the sagacious knowledge of physiognomy peculiar to their race, forbore to intrude upon the moody silence of their master.' To complete the picture, 'One grisly old wolf-dog alone, with the liberty of an indulged favourite, had planted himself close by the chair of state, and occasionally ventured to solicit notice by putting his large hairy head upon his master's knee, or pushing his nose into his hand. Even he was repelled by the stern command, "Down, Balder, down! I am not in the humour for foolery."'

"Another animated sketch occurs in the way of simile.—'The interview between Ratcliffe and Sharpitlaw had an aspect different from all these. They sate for five minutes silent, on opposite sides of a small table, and looked fixedly at each other, with a sharp, knowing, and alert cast of countenance, not unmingled with an inclination to laugh, and resembled, more than any thing else, two dogs, who, preparing for a game at romps, are seen to couch down, and remain in that posture for a little time, watching each other's movements, and waiting which shall begin the game.'

"Let me point out a still more amusing study of canine life: 'While the Antiquary was in full declamation, Juno, who held him in awe, according to the remarkable instinct by which dogs instantly discover those who like or dislike them, had peeped several times into the room, and, encountering nothing very forbidding in his aspect, had at length presumed to introduce her full person, and finally, becoming bold by impunity, she actually ate up Mr Oldbuck's toast, as, looking first at one, then at another of his audience, he repeated with self-complacence,

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof,"—

"You remember the passage in the Fatal Sisters, which, by the way, is not so fine as in the original—But, hey-day! my toast has vanished! I see which way—Ah, thou type of womankind, no wonder they take offence at thy generic appellation!"—(So saying, he shook his fist at Juno, who scoured out of the parlour.)'

"In short, throughout these works, wherever it is possible for a dog to contribute in any way to the effect of a scene, we find there the very dog that was required, in his proper place and attitude. In Branksome Hall, when the feast was over,'

'The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretched upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest race
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.'

The gentle Margaret, when she steals secretly from the castle,

'Pats the shaggy blood-hound
As he rouses him up from his lair.'

When Waverley visits the Baron of Bradwardine, in his concealment at Janet Gellatley's, Ban and Buscar play their parts in every point with perfect discretion; and in the joyous company that assembles at Little Veolan, on the Baron's enlargement, these honest animals are found 'stuffed to the throat with food, in the liberality of Macwheeble's joy,' and 'snoring on the floor.' In the perilous adventure of Henry Bertram, at Portanferry gaol, the action would lose half its interest, without the by-play of little Wasp. At the funeral ceremony of Duncraggan (in the Lady of the Lake), a principal mourner is

—— 'Stumah, who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed;
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew.'

Ellen Douglas smiled (or did not smile)

—— 'to see the stately drake,
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
While her vexed spaniel from the beach,
Bayed at the prize beyond his reach.'

"I will close this growing catalogue of examples with one of the most elegant descriptions that ever sprang from a poet's fancy:

'Delightful praise! like summer rose,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appeared,
For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whistle, on her hand,
The falcon took his favourite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.'

* * * * *

"Their passion for martial subjects, and their success in treating them, form a conspicuous point of resemblance between the novelist and poet. No writer has appeared in our age (and few have ever existed) who could vie with the author of Marmion in describing battles and marches, and all the terrible grandeur of war, except the author of Waverley. Nor is there any man of original genius and powerful inventive talent as conversant with the military character, and as well schooled in tactics as the author of Waverley, except the author of Marmion. Both seem to exult in camps, and to warm at the approach of a soldier. In every warlike scene that awes and agitates, or dazzles and inspires, the poet triumphs; but where any effect is to be produced by dwelling on the minutiæ of military habits and discipline, or exhibiting the blended hues of individual humour and professional peculiarity, as they present themselves in the mess-room or the guard-room, every advantage is on the side of the novelist. I might illustrate this position by tracing all the gradations of character marked out in the novels, from the Baron of Bradwardine to Tom Halliday: but the examples are too well known to require enumeration, and too generally admired to stand in need of panegyric. Both writers, then, must have bestowed a greater attention on military subjects, and have mixed more frequently in the society of soldiers, than is usual with persons not educated to the profession of arms.

"It may be asked why we should take for granted that the writer of these novels is not himself a member of the military profession? The conjecture is a little improbable if we have been right in concluding that the minuteness and multiplicity of our author's legal details are the fruit of his own study and practice; although the same person may certainly, at different periods of life, put on the helmet and the wig, the gorget and the band; attend courts and lie in trenches; head a charge and lead a cause. I cannot help suspecting, however (it is with the greatest diffidence I venture the remark), that in those warlike recitals which so strongly interest the great body of readers, an army critic would discover several particulars that savour more of the amateur than of the practised campaigner. It is not from any technical improprieties (if such exist) that I derive this observation, but, on the contrary, from a too great minuteness and over-curious diligence, at times perceptible in the military details; which, amidst a seeming fluency and familiarity, betray, I think, here and there, the lurking vestiges of labour and contrivance, like the marks of pickaxes in an artificial

grotto. The accounts of operations in the field, if not more circumstantial than a professional author would have made them, are occasionally circumstantial on points which such an author would have thought it idle to dwell upon. A writer who derived his knowledge of war from experience would, no doubt, like the Author of Waverley, delight in shaping out imaginary manœuvres, or in filling up the traditional outline of those martial enterprises and conflicts, which have found a place in history; perhaps, too, he would dwell on these parts of his narrative a little longer than was strictly necessary; but in describing (for example) the advance of a party of soldiers, threatened by an ambuscade, he would scarcely think it worth while to relate at large that the captain 're-formed his line of march, commanded his soldiers to unsling their firelocks and fix their bayonets, and formed an advanced and rear-guard, each consisting of a non-commissioned officer and two privates, who received strict orders to keep an alert look-out:' or that when the enemy appeared, 'he ordered the rear-guard to join the centre, and both to close up to the advance, doubling his files, so as to occupy with his column the whole practicable part of the road,' &c. Again, in representing a defeated corps retiring and pressed by the enemy, he would probably never think of recording (as our novelist does in his incomparable narrative of the engagement at Drumclog) that the commanding officer gave such directions as these—'Let Allan form the regiment, and do you two retreat up the hill in two bodies, each halting alternately as the other falls back. I'll keep the rogues in check with the rear-guard, making a stand and facing from time to time.' I do not offer these observations for the purpose of depreciating a series of military pictures, which have never been surpassed in richness, animation, and distinctness; I will own, too, that such details as I have pointed out are the fittest that could be selected for the generality of novel-readers; I merely contend that a writer practically acquainted with war would either have passed over these circumstances as too common to require particular mention, or if he had thought it necessary to enlarge upon these, would have dwelt with proportionate minuteness on incidents of a less ordinary kind, which the recollections of a soldier would have readily supplied, and his imagination would have rested on with complacency. He would, in short, have left as little undone for the military, as the present author has for the legal part of his narratives. But the most ingenious writer, who attempts to discourse with technical familiarity on arts or pur-

suits with which he is not habitually conversant, will too surely fall into a superfluous particularity on common and trivial points, proportioned to his deficiency in those nicer details which imply practical knowledge." . . . . . .

'The prince of darkness is a gentleman.' †

"Another point of resemblance between the Author of Waverley and him of Flodden Field is, that both are unquestionably men of good society. Of the anonymous writer I infer this from his works; of the poet it is unnecessary to deduce such a character from his writings, because they are not anonymous. I am the more inclined to dwell upon this merit in the novelist, on account of its rarity; for among the whole multitude of authors, well or ill educated, who devote themselves to poetry or to narrative or dramatic fiction, how few there are who give any proof in their works, of the refined taste, the instinctive sense of propriety, the clear spirit of honour, nay, of the familiar acquaintance with conventional forms of good-breeding, which are essential to the character of a gentleman! Even of the small number who, in a certain degree, possess these qualifications, how rarely do we find one who can so conduct his fable, and so order his dialogue throughout, that nothing shall be found either repugnant to honourable feelings or inconsistent with polished manners! How constantly, even in the best works of fiction, are we disgusted with such offences against all generous principle, as the reading of letters by those for whom they were not intended; taking advantage of accidents to overhear private conversation; revealing what in honour should have remained secret; plotting against men as enemies, and at the same time making use of their services; dishonest practices on the passions or sensibilities of women by their admirers; falsehoods, not always indirect; and an endless variety of low artifices, which appear to be thought quite legitimate if carried on through subordinate agents. And all these knaveries are assigned to characters which the reader is expected to honour with his sympathy, or at least to receive into favour before the story concludes.

"The sins against propriety in manners are as frequent and as glaring. I do not speak of the hoyden vivacity, harlot tenderness, and dancing-school affability, with which vulgar novel-writers always deck out their countesses and principessas, chevaliers, dukes,

† *King Lear*, Act III. Sc. 4.

and marquises; but it would be easy to produce, from authors of a better class, abundant instances of bookish and laborious pleasantry, of pert and insipid gossip or mere slang, the wrecks, perhaps, of an obsolete fashionable dialect, set down as the brilliant conversation of a witty and elegant society: incredible outrages on the common decorum of life, represented as traits of eccentric humour; familiar raillery pushed to downright rudeness; affectation or ill-breeding over-coloured so as to become insupportable insolence; extravagant rants on the most delicate topics indulged in before all the world; expressions freely interchanged between gentlemen, which, by the customs of that class, are neither used nor tolerated; and quarrels carried on most bombastically and abusively, even to mortal defiance, without a thought bestowed upon the numbers, sex, nerves, or discretion of the bystanders.

"You will perceive that in recapitulating the offences of other writers, I have pronounced an indirect eulogium on the Author of Waverley. No man, I think, has a clearer view of what is just and honourable in principle and conduct, or possesses in a higher degree that elegant taste, and that chivalrous generosity of feeling, which, united with exact judgment, give an author the power of comprehending and expressing, not merely the right and fit, but the graceful and exalted in human action. As an illustration of these remarks, a somewhat homely one perhaps, let me call to your recollection the incident, so wild and extravagant in itself, of Sir Piercie Shafton's elopement with the miller's daughter. In the address and feeling with which the author has displayed the high-minded delicacy of Queen Elizabeth's courtier to the unguarded village nymph, in his brief reflections arising out of this part of the narrative, and indeed in his whole conception and management of the adventure, I do not know whether the moralist or the gentleman is most to be admired: it is impossible to praise too warmly either the sound taste, or the virtuous sentiment which have imparted so much grace and interest to such a hazardous episode.

"It may, I think, be generally affirmed, on a review of all the six-and-thirty volumes, in which this author has related the adventures of some twenty or more heroes and heroines (without counting second-rate personages), that there is not an unhandsome action or degrading sentiment recorded of any person who is recommended to the full esteem of the reader. To be blameless on this head is one of the strongest proofs a writer can give of honourable principles implanted by education and refreshed by good society.

"The correctness in morals is scarcely more remarkable than the refinement and propriety in manners, by which these novels are distinguished. Where the character of a gentleman is introduced, we generally find it supported without affectation or constraint, and often with so much truth, animation, and dignity, that we forget ourselves into a longing to behold and converse with the accomplished creature of imagination. It is true that the volatile and elegant man of wit and pleasure, and the gracefully fantastic petite-maitresse, are a species of character scarcely ever attempted, and even the few sketches we meet with in this style are not worthy of so great a master. But the aristocratic country gentleman, the ancient lady of quality, the gallant cavalier, the punctilious young soldier, and the jocund veteran, whose high mind is mellowed, not subdued by years, are drawn with matchless vigour, grace, and refinement. There is, in all these creations, a spirit of gentility, not merely of that negative kind which avoids giving offence, but of a strong, commanding, and pervading quality, blending unimpaired with the richest humour and wildest eccentricity, and communicating an interest and an air of originality to characters which, without it, would be wearisome and insipid, or would fade into commonplace. In Waverley, for example, if it were not for this powerful charm, the severe but warm-hearted Major Melville and the generous Colonel Talbot would become mere ordinary machines for carrying on the plot, and Sir Everard, the hero of an episode that might be coveted by Mackenzie, would encounter the frowns of every impatient reader, for unprofitably retarding the story at its first outset.

"But without dwelling on minor instances, I will refer you at once to the character of Colonel Mannering, as one of the most striking representations I am acquainted with, of a gentleman in feelings and in manners, in habits, taste, predilections; nay, if the expression may be ventured, a gentleman even in prejudices, passions, and caprices. Had it been less than all I have described; had any refinement, any nicety of touch been wanting, the whole portrait must have been coarse, common, and repulsive, hardly distinguishable from the moody father and domineering chieftain of every hackneyed romance-writer. But it was no vulgar hand that drew the lineaments of Colonel Mannering: no ordinary mind could have conceived that exquisite combination of sternness and sensibility, injurious haughtiness and chivalrous courtesy; the promptitude, decision, and imperious spirit of a military disciplin-

arian; the romantic caprices of an untameable enthusiast; generosity impatient of limit or impediment; pride scourged but not subdued by remorse; and a cherished philosophical severity, maintaining ineffectual conflicts with native tenderness and constitutional irritability. Supposing that it had entered into the thoughts of an inferior writer to describe a temper of mind at once impetuous, kind, arrogant, affectionate, stern, sensitive, deliberate, fanciful; supposing even that he had had the skill to combine these different qualities harmoniously and naturally, yet how could he have attained the Shaksperian felicity of those delicate and unambitious touches, by which this author shapes and chisels out individual character from general nature, and imparts a distinct personality to the creature of his invention? Such are (for example) the slight tinge of superstition, contracted by the romantic young Astrologer in his adventure at Ellangowan, not wholly effaced in maturer life, and extending itself by contagion to the mind of his daughter," &c. &c.

—It would have gratified Mr Adolphus could he have known when he penned these pages a circumstance which the reperusal of them brings to my memory. When Guy Mannering was first published, the Ettrick Shepherd said to Professor Wilson, "I have done wi' doubts now. Colonel Mannering is just Walter Scott, painted by himself." This was repeated to James Ballantyne, and he again mentioned it to Scott—who smiled in approbation of the Shepherd's shrewdness, and often afterwards, when the printer expressed an opinion in which he could not concur, would cut him short with —"James—James—you'll find that Colonel Mannering has laid down the law on this point."——I resume my extract—

"All the productions I am acquainted with, both of the poet and of the prose writer, recommend themselves by a native piety and goodness, not generally predominant in modern works of imagination; and which, where they do appear, are too often disfigured by eccentricity, pretension, or bad taste. In the works before us there is a constant tendency to promote the desire of

excellence in ourselves, and the love of it in our neighbours, by making us think honourably of our general nature. Whatever kindly or charitable affection, whatever principle of manly and honest ambition exists within us, is roused and stimulated by the perusal of these writings; our passions are won to the cause of justice, purity, and self-denial; and the old, indissoluble ties that bind us to country, kindred, and birth-place, appear to strengthen as we read, and brace themselves more firmly about the heart and imagination. Both writers, although peculiarly happy in their conception of all chivalrous and romantic excellencies, are still more distinguished by their deep and true feeling and expressive delineation of the graces and virtues proper to domestic life. The gallant, elevated, and punctilious character which a Frenchman contemplates in speaking of 'un honnête homme,' is singularly combined, in these authors, with the genial, homely good qualities that win from a Caledonian the exclamation of 'honest man!' But the crown of their merits, as virtuous and moral writers, is the manly and exemplary spirit with which, upon all seasonable occasions, they pay honour and homage to religion, ascribing to it its just pre-eminence among the causes of human happiness, and dwelling on it as the only certain source of pure and elevated thoughts, and upright, benevolent, and magnanimous actions.

"This then is common to the books of both writers; that they furnish a direct and distinguished contrast to the atrabilious gloom of some modern works of genius, and the wanton, but not artless levity of others. They yield a memorable, I trust an immortal, accession to the evidences of a truth not always fashionable in literature, that the mind of man may put forth all its bold luxuriance of original thought, strong feeling, and vivid imagination, without being loosed from any sacred and social bond, or pruned of any legitimate affection; and that the Muse is indeed a 'heavenly goddess,' and not a graceless, lawless runagate,

'ἀφρήτωρ, ἀθέμιστος, ἀνέστιος'—

"Good sense, the sure foundation of excellence in all the arts, is another leading characteristic of these productions. Assuming the author of Waverley and the author of Marmion to be the same person, it would be difficult in our times to find a second equally free from affectation, prejudice, and every other distortion or depravity of judgment, whether arising from ignorance, weakness, or corruption of morals. It is astonishing that so volumi-

nous and successful a writer should so seldom be betrayed into any of those 'fantastic tricks' which, in such a man, make 'the angels weep,' and (*è converso*) the critics laugh. He adopts no fashionable cant, colloquial, philosophical, or literary; he takes no delight in being unintelligible; he does not amuse himself by throwing out those fine sentimental and metaphysical threads which float upon the air, and tease and tickle the passengers, but present no palpable substance to their grasp; he aims at no beauties that 'scorn the eye of vulgar light;' he is no dealer in paradoxes; no affecter of new doctrines in taste or morals; he has no eccentric sympathies or antipathies; no maudlin philanthropy, or impertinent cynicism; no non-descript hobby-horse; and with all his matchless energy and originality of mind, he is content to admire popular books, and enjoy popular pleasures; to cherish those opinions which experience has sanctioned; to reverence those institutions which antiquity has hallowed; and to enjoy, admire, cherish, and reverence all these with the same plainness, simplicity, and sincerity as our ancestors did of old.

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"I cannot help dwelling for a moment on the great similarity of manner apparent in the female portraits of the two writers. The pictures of their heroines are executed with a peculiar fineness, delicacy, and minuteness of touch, and with a care at times almost amounting to timidity, so that they generally appear more highly finished, but less boldly and strikingly thrown out, than the figures with which they are surrounded. Their elegance and purity are always admirable, and are happily combined, in most instances, with unaffected ease and natural spirit. Strong practical sense is their most prevailing characteristic, unaccompanied by any repulsive air of selfishness, pedantry, or unfeminine harshness. Few writers have ever evinced, in so strong a degree as the authors of Marmion and Waverley, that manly regard, and dignified but enthusiastic devotion, which may be expressed by the term loyalty to the fair sex, the honourable attribute of chivalrous and romantic ages. If they touch on the faults of womankind, their satire is playful, not contemptuous; and their acquaintance with female manners, graces, and foibles is apparently drawn, not from libertine experience, but from the guileless familiarity of domestic life.

"Of all human ties and connexions there is none so frequently brought in view, or adorned with so many touches of the most affecting eloquence by both these writers, as the pure and tender

relation of father and daughter. Douglas and Ellen in the Lady of the Lake will immediately occur to you as a distinguished example. Their mutual affection and solicitude; their pride in each other's excellencies; the parent's regret of the obscurity to which fate has doomed his child; and the daughter's self-devotion to her father's welfare and safety, constitute the highest interest of the poem, and that which is most uniformly sustained; nor does this or any other romance of the same author contain a finer stroke of passion than the overboiling of Douglas's wrath, when, mixed as a stranger with the crowd at Stirling, he sees his daughter's favourite Lufra chastised by the royal huntsman.

"In Rokeby the filial attachment and duteous anxieties of Matilda form the leading feature of her character, and the chief source of her distresses. The intercourse between King Arthur and his daughter Gyneth, in The Bridal of Triermain, is neither long, nor altogether amicable; but the monarch's feelings on first beholding that beautiful 'slip of wilderness,' and his manner of receiving her before the queen and court, are too forcibly and naturally described to be omitted in this enumeration.

"Of all the novels, there are at most but two or three in which a fond father and affectionate daughter may not be pointed out among the principal characters, and in which the main interest of many scenes does not arise out of that paternal and filial relation. What a beautiful display of natural feeling, under every turn of circumstances that can render the situations of child and parent agonizing or delightful, runs through the history of David Deans and his two daughters! How affecting is the tale of Leicester's unhappy Countess, after we have seen her forsaken father consuming away with moody sorrow in his joyless manor-house! How exquisite are the grouping and contrast of Isaac, the kind but sordid Jew, and his heroic Rebecca, of the buckram Baron of Bradwardine and the sensitive Rose, the reserved but ardent Mannering, and the flighty coquette Julia! In the Antiquary, and Bride of Lammermoor, anxiety is raised to the most painful height by the spectacle of father and daughter exposed together to imminent and frightful peril. The heroines in Rob Roy and the Black Dwarf are duteous and devoted daughters, the one of an unfortunate, the other of an unworthy parent. In the whole story of Kenilworth there is nothing that more strongly indicates a master-hand than the paternal carefulness and apprehensions of the churl Foster; and among the most striking scenes in A Legend of Montrose, is that in which

Sir Duncan Campbell is attracted by an obscure yearning of the heart toward his unknown child, the supposed orphan of Darnlinvarach."

It would be impossible for one to follow out Mr Adolphus in his most ingenious tracings of petty coincidences in thought, and, above all, in expression, between the poet of Marmion and the novelist of Waverley. His apology for the minuteness of his detail in that part of his work, is, however, too graceful to be omitted:—"It cannot, I think, appear frivolous or irrelevant, in the enquiry we are pursuing, to dwell on these minute coincidences. Unimportant indeed they are if looked upon as subjects of direct criticism; but considered with reference to our present purpose, they resemble those light substances which, floating on the trackless sea, discover the true setting of some mighty current: they are the buoyant driftwood which betrays the hidden communication of two great poetic oceans."

I conclude with re-quoting a fragment from one of the quaint tracts of Sir Thomas Urquhart. The following is the epigraph of Mr Adolphus's 5th Letter:—

"O with how great liveliness did he represent the conditions of all manner of men!—From the overweening monarch to the peevish swaine, through all intermediate degrees of the superficial courtier or proud warrior, dissembled churchman, doting old man, cozening lawyer, lying traveler, covetous merchant, rude seaman, pedantick scolar, the amorous shepheard, envious artisan, vain-glorious master and tricky servant;———He had all the jeers, squibs, flouts, buls, quips, taunts, whims, jests, clinches, gybes, mokes, jerks, with all the several kinds of equivocations and other sophistical captions, that could properly be adapted to the person by whose representation he intended to inveagle the company into a fit of mirth!"

I have it not in my power to produce the letter in which Scott conveyed to Heber his opinion of this work. I know, however, that it ended with a request

that he should present Mr Adolphus with his thanks for the handsome terms in which his poetical efforts had been spoken of throughout, and request him, in the name of the *author of Marmion*, not to revisit Scotland without reserving a day for Abbotsford; and the *Eidolon* of the author of *Waverley* was made, a few months afterwards, to speak as follows in the Introduction to the Fortunes of Nigel:—"These letters to the member for the University of Oxford show the wit, genius, and delicacy of the author, which I heartily wish to see engaged on a subject of more importance; and show, besides, that the preservation of my character of *incognito* has engaged early talent in the discussion of a curious question of evidence. But a cause, however ingeniously pleaded, is not therefore gained. You may remember the neatly-wrought chain of circumstantial evidence, so artificially brought forward to prove Sir Philip Francis's title to the Letters of Junius, seemed at first irrefragable; yet the influence of the reasoning has passed away, and Junius, in the general opinion, is as much unknown as ever. But on this subject I will not be soothed or provoked into saying one word more. To say who I am not, would be one step towards saying who I am; and as I desire not, any more than a certain Justice of Peace mentioned by Shenstone, the noise or report such things make in the world, I shall continue to be silent on a subject which, in my opinion, is very undeserving the noise that has been made about it, and still more unworthy of the serious employment of such ingenuity as has been displayed by the young letter-writer."*

* See *Waverley Novels*, vol. xxvi., p. xxxiv.

## CHAP. VI.

NEW BUILDINGS AT ABBOTSFORD—CHIEFSWOOD—WILLIAM ERSKINE—LETTER TO COUNTESS PURGSTALL—PROGRESS OF THE PIRATE—PRIVATE LETTERS IN THE REIGN OF JAMES I.—COMMENCEMENT OF THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL—SECOND SALE OF COPYRIGHTS—CONTRACT FOR "FOUR WORKS OF FICTION"—ENORMOUS PROFITS OF THE NOVELIST, AND EXTRAVAGANT PROJECTS OF CONSTABLE—THE PIRATE PUBLISHED—LORD BYRON'S CAIN, DEDICATED TO SCOTT—AFFAIR OF THE BEACON NEWSPAPER—FRANCK'S NORTHERN MEMOIRS—AND NOTES OF LORD FOUNTAINHALL, PUBLISHED.

1821.

When Sir Walter returned from London, he brought with him Mr Blore's detailed plans for the completion of Abbotsford; the wall and gateway of the court in front; and the beautiful open screen-work of stone connecting the house with the garden; this last having been originally devised by himself, and constituting certainly the most graceful feature about the edifice. The foundations towards the river were forthwith laid, and some little progress was made during the autumn; but he was very reluctant to authorize the demolition of the rustic porch of the old cottage, with its luxuriant overgrowth of roses and jessamines; kept it standing for months after his workpeople complained of the obstruction—and indeed could not make up his mind to sign the death-warrant of this favourite bower until winter had

robbed it of its beauties. He then made an excursion from Edinburgh, on purpose to be present at its downfall—saved as many of the creepers as seemed likely to survive removal, and planted them with his own hands, about a somewhat similar porch, erected expressly for their reception, at his daughter Sophia's little cottage of Chiefswood.

There my wife and I spent this summer and autumn of 1821—the first of several seasons, which will ever dwell on my memory as the happiest of my life. We were near enough Abbotsford to partake as often as we liked of its brilliant and constantly varying society; yet could do so without being exposed to the worry and exhaustion of spirit which the daily reception of new comers entailed upon all the family, except Sir Walter himself. But, in truth, even he was not always proof against the annoyances connected with such a style of open-house-keeping. Even his temper sunk sometimes under the solemn applauses of learned dulness, the vapid raptures of painted and periwigged dowagers, the horse-leech avidity with which underbred foreigners urged their questions, and the pompous simpers of condescending magnates. When sore beset at home in this way, he would every now and then discover that he had some very particular business to attend to on an outlying part of his estate, and craving the indulgence of his guests overnight, appear at the cabin in the glen before its inhabitants were astir in the morning. The clatter of Sibyl Grey's hoofs, the yelping of Mustard and Spice, and his own joyous shout of *reveillée* under our windows, were the signal that he had burst his toils and meant for that day to "take his ease in his inn." On descending, he was to be found seated with all his dogs and ours about him, under a spreading ash that overshadowed half the bank between the cottage and the

brook, pointing the edge of his woodman's axe for himself, and listening to Tom Purdie's lecture touching the plantation that most needed thinning. After breakfast, he would take possession of a dressingroom up stairs, and write a chapter of *The Pirate;* and then, having made up and despatched his packet for Mr Ballantyne, away to join Purdie wherever the foresters were at work—and sometimes to labour among them as strenuously as John Swanston himself — until it was time either to rejoin his own party at Abbotsford or the quiet circle of the cottage. When his guests were few and friendly, he often made them come over and meet him at Chiefswood in a body towards evening; and surely he never appeared to more amiable advantage than when helping his young people with their little arrangements upon such occasions. He was ready with all sorts of devices to supply the wants of a narrow establishment; he used to delight particularly in sinking the wine in a well under the *brae* ere he went out, and hawling up the basket just before dinner was announced —this primitive process being, he said, what he had always practised when a young housekeeper, and in his opinion far superior in its results to any application of ice; and, in the same spirit, whenever the weather was sufficiently genial, he voted for dining out of doors altogether, which at once got rid of the inconvenience of very small rooms, and made it natural and easy for the gentlemen to help the ladies, so that the paucity of servants went for nothing. Mr Rose used to amuse himself with likening the scene and the party to the closing act of one of those little French dramas where "Monsieur le Comte," and "Madame la Comtesse" appear feasting at a village bridal under the trees; but in truth, our "M. le Comte" was only trying to live over again for a few simple hours his own old life of Lasswade.

When circumstances permitted, he usually spent one evening at least in the week at our little cottage; and almost as frequently he did the like with the Fergusons, to whose table he could bring chance visiters, when he pleased, with equal freedom as to his daughter's. Indeed it seemed to be much a matter of chance, any fine day when there had been no alarming invasion of the Southron, whether the three families (which, in fact, made but one) should dine at Abbotsford, at Huntly Burn, or at Chiefswood; and at none of them was the party considered quite complete, unless it included also Mr Laidlaw. Death has laid a heavy hand upon that circle—as happy a circle I believe as ever met. Bright eyes now closed in dust, gay voices for ever silenced, seem to haunt me as I write. With three exceptions, they are all gone. Even since the last of these volumes was finished, she whom I may now sadly record as, next to Sir Walter himself, the chief ornament and delight of all those simple meetings—she to whose love I owed my own place in them—Scott's eldest daughter, the one of all his children who in countenance, mind, and manners, most resembled himself, and who indeed was as like him in all things as a gentle innocent woman can ever be to a great man deeply tried and skilled in the struggles and perplexities of active life—she, too, is no more. And in the very hour that saw her laid in her grave, the only other female survivor, her dearest friend Margaret Ferguson, breathed her last also.—But enough—and more than I intended—I must resume the story of Abbotsford.

During several weeks of that delightful summer, Scott had under his roof Mr William Erskine and two of his daughters; this being, I believe, their first visit to Tweedside since the death of Mrs Erskine in September 1819. He had probably made a point of having his

friend with him at this particular time, because he was desirous of having the benefit of his advice and corrections from day to day as he advanced in the composition of the Pirate—with the localities of which romance the Sheriff of Orkney and Zetland was of course thoroughly familiar. At all events, the constant and eager delight with which Erskine watched the progress of the tale has left a deep impression on my memory; and indeed I heard so many of its chapters first read from the MS. by him, that I can never open the book now without thinking I hear his voice. Sir Walter used to give him at breakfast the pages he had written that morning; and very commonly, while he was again at work in his study, Erskine would walk over to Chiefswood, that he might have the pleasure of reading them aloud to my wife and me under our favourite tree, before the packet had to be sealed up for the printer, or rather for the transcriber in Edinburgh. I cannot paint the delight and the pride with which he acquitted himself on such occasions. The little artifice of his manner was merely superficial, and was wholly forgotten as tender affection and admiration, fresh as the impulses of childhood, glistened in his eye, and trembled in his voice.

This reminds me that I have not yet attempted any sketch of the person and manners of Scott's most intimate friend. Their case was no contradiction to the old saying, that the most attached comrades are often very unlike each other in character and temperament. The mere physical contrast was as strong as could well be, and this is not unworthy of notice here; for Erskine was, I think, the only man in whose society Scott took great pleasure, during the more vigorous part of his life, that had neither constitution nor inclination for any of the rough bodily exercises in which he himself delighted.

The Counsellor (as Scott always called him) was a little man of feeble make, who seemed unhappy when his pony got beyond a foot-pace, and had never, I should suppose, addicted himself to any out-of-doors sport whatever. He would, I fancy, have as soon thought of slaying his own mutton as of handling a fowling-piece: he used to shudder when he saw a party equipped for coursing, as if murder were in the wind; but the cool meditative angler was in his eyes the abomination of abominations. His small elegant features, hectic cheek, and soft hazel eyes were the index of the quick sensitive gentle spirit within. He had the warm heart of a woman, her generous enthusiasm, and some of her weaknesses. A beautiful landscape, or a fine strain of music would send the tears rolling down his cheek; and though capable, I have no doubt, of exhibiting, had his duty called him to do so, the highest spirit of a hero or a martyr, he had very little command over his nerves amidst circumstances such as men of ordinary mould (to say nothing of iron fabrics like Scott's) regard with indifference. He would dismount to lead his horse down what his friend hardly perceived to be a descent at all; grew pale at a precipice; and, unlike the White Lady of Avenel, would go a long way round for a bridge.

Erskine had as yet been rather unfortunate in his professional career, and thought a sheriffship by no means the kind of advancement due to his merits, and which his connexions might naturally have secured for him. These circumstances had at the time when I first observed him tinged his demeanour; he had come to intermingle a certain wayward snappishness now and then with his forensic exhibitions, and in private seemed inclined (though altogether incapable of abandoning the Tory party) to say bitter things of people in high

places; but with these exceptions, never was benevolence towards all the human race more lively and overflowing than his evidently was, even when he considered himself as one who had reason to complain of his luck in the world. Now, however, these little asperities had disappeared; one great real grief had cast its shadow over him, and submissive to the chastisement of heaven, he had no longer any thoughts for the petty misusage of mankind. Scott's apprehension was, that his ambition was extinguished with his resentment; and he was now using every endeavour, in connexion with their common friend the Lord Advocate Rae, to procure for Erskine that long-coveted seat on the bench, about which the subdued widower himself had ceased to occupy his mind. By and by these views were realized to Scott's high satisfaction, and for a brief season with the happiest effect on Erskine's own spirits; but I shall not anticipate the sequel.

Meanwhile he shrunk from the collisions of general society in Edinburgh, and lived almost exclusively in his own little circle of intimates. His conversation, though somewhat precise and finical on the first impression, was rich in knowledge. His literary ambition, active and aspiring at the outset, had long before this time merged in his profound veneration for Scott; but he still read a great deal, and did so as much I believe with a view to assisting Scott by hints and suggestions, as for his own amusement. He had much of his friend's tact in extracting the picturesque from old, and, generally speaking, dull books; and in bringing out his stores he often showed a great deal of quaint humour and sly wit.

Scott, on his side, respected, trusted, and loved him, much as an affectionate husband does the wife who gave him her heart in youth, and thinks his thoughts rather than her own in the evening of life; he soothed, cheered,

and sustained Erskine habitually; I do not believe a more entire and perfect confidence ever subsisted than theirs was and always had been in each other; and to one who had duly observed the creeping jealousies of human nature, it might perhaps seem doubtful on which side the balance of real nobility of heart and character, as displayed in their connexion at the time of which I am speaking, ought to be cast.

Among the common friends of their young days, of whom they both delighted to speak—and always spoke with warm and equal affection—was the sister of their friend Cranstoun, the confidant of Scott's first unfortunate love, whom neither had now seen for a period of more than twenty years. This lady had undergone domestic afflictions more than sufficient to have crushed almost any spirit but her own. Her husband, the Count Purgstall, had died some years before this time, leaving her an only son, a youth of the most amiable disposition, and possessing abilities which, had he lived to develope them, must have secured for him a high station in the annals of genius. This hope of her eyes, the last heir of an illustrious lineage, followed his father to the tomb in the nineteenth year of his age. The desolate Countess was urged by her family in Scotland to return, after this bereavement, to her native country; but she had vowed to her son on his deathbed that one day her dust should be mingled with his; and no argument could induce her to depart from the resolution of remaining in solitary Styria. By her desire, a valued friend of the house of Purgstall, who had been born and bred up on their estates, the celebrated Orientalist, Joseph von Hammer, compiled a little memoir of "The Two Last Counts of Purgstall," which he put forth, in January 1821, under the title of "Denkmahl," or Monument; and of this work the Countess sent a copy to Sir Walter (with whom

her correspondence had been during several years suspended), by the hands of her eldest brother, Mr Henry Cranstoun, who had been visiting her in Styria, and who at this time occupied a villa within a few miles of Abbotsford. Scott's letter of acknowledgment never reached her; and indeed I doubt if it was ever despatched. He appears to have meditated a set of consolatory verses for its conclusion, and the muse not answering his call at the moment, I suspect he had allowed the sheet, which I now transcribe, to fall aside and be lost sight of among his multifarious masses of MS.

*To the Countess Purgstall, &c. &c.*

" My Dear and much valued Friend,

" You cannot imagine how much I was interested and affected by receiving your token of your kind recollection, after the interval of so many years. Your brother Henry breakfasted with me yesterday, and gave me the letter and the book, which served me as a matter of much melancholy reflection for many hours.

" Hardly any thing makes the mind recoil so much upon itself, as the being suddenly and strongly recalled to times long past, and that by the voice of one whom we have so much loved and respected. Do not think I have ever forgotten you, or the many happy days I passed in Frederick Street, in society which fate has separated so far, and for so many years.

" The little volume was particularly acceptable to me, as it acquainted me with many circumstances, of which distance and imperfect communication had left me either entirely ignorant, or had transmitted only inaccurate information.

" Alas ! my dear friend, what can the utmost efforts of friendship offer you, beyond the sympathy which, however sincere, must sound like an empty compliment

in the ear of affliction. God knows with what willingness I would undertake anything which might afford you the melancholy consolation of knowing how much your old and early friend interests himself in the sad event which has so deeply wounded your peace of mind. The verses, therefore, which conclude this letter, must not be weighed according to their intrinsic value, for the more inadequate they are to express the feelings they would fain convey, the more they show the author's anxious wish to do what may be grateful to you.

"In truth, I have long given up poetry. I have had my day with the public; and being no great believer in poetical immortality, I was very well pleased to rise a winner, without continuing the game, till I was beggared of any credit I had acquired. Besides, I felt the prudence of giving way before the more forcible and powerful genius of Byron. If I were either greedy, or jealous of poetical fame—and both are strangers to my nature—I might comfort myself with the thought, that I would hesitate to strip myself to the contest so fearlessly as Byron does; or to command the wonder and terror of the public, by exhibiting, in my own person, the sublime attitude of the dying gladiator. But with the old frankness of twenty years since, I will fairly own, that this same delicacy of mine may arise more from conscious want of vigour and inferiority, than from a delicate dislike to the nature of the conflict. At any rate, there is a time for every thing, and without swearing oaths to it, I think my time for poetry has gone by.

"My health suffered horridly last year, I think from over labour and excitation; and though it is now apparently restored to its usual tone, yet during the long and painful disorder (spasms in the stomach), and the

frightful process of cure, by a prolonged use of calomel, I learned that my frame was made of flesh, and not of iron, a conviction which I will long keep in remembrance, and avoid any occupation, so laborious and agitating, as poetry must be, to be worth any thing.

"In this humour, I often think of passing a few weeks on the continent—a summer vacation if I can—and of course my attraction to Gratz would be very strong. I fear this is the only chance of our meeting in this world, we, who once saw each other daily! For I understand from George and Henry, that there is little chance of your coming here. And when I look around me, and consider how many changes you will see in feature, form, and fashion, amongst all you knew and loved; and how much, no sudden squall, or violent tempest, but the slow and gradual progress of life's long voyage, has severed all the gallant fellowships whom you left spreading their sails to the morning breeze, I really am not sure that you would have much pleasure.

"The gay and wild romance of life is over with all of us. The real, dull, and stern history of humanity has made a far greater progress over our heads; and age, dark and unlovely, has laid his crutch over the stoutest fellow's shoulders. One thing your old society may boast, that they have all run their course with honour, and almost all with distinction; and the brother suppers of Frederick Street have certainly made a very considerable figure in the world, as was to be expected, from her talents under whose auspices they were assembled.

"One of the most pleasant sights which you would see in Scotland, as it now stands, would be your brother George in possession of the most beautiful and

romantic place in Clydesdale—Corehouse. I have promised often to go out with him, and assist him with my deep experience as a planter and landscape gardener. I promise you my oaks will outlast my laurels; and I pique myself more upon my compositions for manure than on any other compositions whatsoever to which I was ever accessary. But so much does business of one sort or other engage us both, that we never have been able to fix a time which suited us both; and with the utmost wish to make out the party, perhaps we never may.

"This is a melancholy letter, but it is chiefly so from the sad tone of yours—who have had such real disasters to lament—while mine is only the humorous sadness, which a retrospect on human life is sure to produce on the most prosperous. For my own course of life, I have only to be ashamed of its prosperity, and afraid of its termination; for I have little reason, arguing on the doctrine of chances, to hope that the same good fortune will attend me for ever. I have had an affectionate and promising family, many friends, few unfriends, and I think, no enemies—and more of fame and fortune than mere literature ever procured for a man before.

"I dwell among my own people, and have many whose happiness is dependent on me, and which I study to the best of my power. I trust my temper, which you know is by nature good and easy, has not been spoiled by flattery or prosperity; and therefore I have escaped entirely that irritability of disposition which I think is planted, like the slave in the poet's chariot, to prevent his enjoying his triumph.

"Should things, therefore, change with me—and in these times, or indeed in any times, such change is to be apprehended—I trust I shall be able to surrender these adventitious advantages, as I would my upper

dress, as something extremely comfortable, but which I can make shift to do without." * . . . .

As I may have no occasion hereafter to allude to the early friend with whose sorrows Scott thus sympathized amidst the meridian splendours of his own worldly career, I may take this opportunity of mentioning, that Captain Basil Hall's conjecture of her having been the original of Diana Vernon, appeared to myself from the first chimerical; and that I have since heard those who knew her best in the days of her intercourse with Sir Walter, express the same opinion in the most decided manner. But to return.

While the Pirate was advancing under Mr Erskine's eye, Scott had even more than the usual allowance of minor literary operations on hand. He edited a reprint of a curious old book, called, 'Franck's Northern Memoir, and the Contemplative Angler;' and he also prepared for the press a volume published soon after, under the title of 'Chronological Notes on Scottish Affairs, 1680 to 1701, from the Diary of Lord Fountainhall.' The professional writings of that celebrated old lawyer, had been much in his hands from his early years, on account of the incidental light which they throw on the events of a most memorable period in Scottish history: and he seems to have contemplated some more considerable selection from his remains, but to have dropped these intentions, on being given to understand that they might interfere with those of Lord Fountainhall's accomplished representative, the present

* In communicating this letter to my friend Captain Hall, when he was engaged in his Account of a Visit to Madame de Purgstall during the last months of her life, I suggested to him, in consequence of an expression about Scott's health, that it must have been written in 1820. The date of the "Denkmahl," to which it refers, is, however, sufficient evidence that I ought to have said 1821.

Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, Baronet. It is, however, to be regretted, that Sir Thomas's promise of a Life of his eminent ancestor has not yet been redeemed.

In August appeared the volume of the Novelist's Library, containing Scott's Life of Smollett; and it being now ascertained that John Ballantyne had died a debtor, the editor offered to proceed with this series of prefaces, on the footing that the whole profits of the work should go to his widow. Mr Constable, whose health was now beginning to break, had gone southwards in quest of more genial air, and was at Hastings when he heard of this proposition. He immediately wrote to me, entreating me to represent to Sir Walter that the undertaking, having been coldly received at first, was unlikely to grow in favour if continued on the same plan —that in his opinion the bulk of the volumes, and the small type of their text, had been unwisely chosen for a work of mere entertainment, and could only be suitable for one of reference; that Ballantyne's Novelist's Library, therefore, ought to be stopped at once, and another in a lighter shape, to range with the late collected edition of the first series of the Waverley Romances, announced with his own name as publisher, and Scott's as editor. He proposed at the same time to commence the issue of a Select Library of English Poetry, with prefaces and a few notes by the same hand; and calculating that each of these collections should extend to twenty-five volumes, and that the publication of both might be concluded within two years—"the writing of the prefaces, &c., forming perhaps an occasional relief from more important labours"!—the bookseller offered to pay their editor in all the sum of L.6000: a small portion of which sum, as he hinted, would undoubtedly be more than Mrs John Ballantyne could ever hope to derive from the prosecution of her husband's

last publishing adventure. Various causes combined to prevent the realization of these magnificent projects. Scott now, as at the beginning of his career of speculation, had views about what a collection of English Poetry should be, in which even Constable could not, on consideration, be made to concur; and I have already explained the coldness with which he regarded further attempts upon our Elder Novelists. The Ballantyne Library crept on to the tenth volume, and was then dropt abruptly; and the double negotiation with Constable was never renewed.

Lady Louisa Stuart had not, I fancy, read Scott's Lives of the Novelists until, some years after this time, they were collected into two little piratical duodecimos by a Parisian bookseller; and on her then expressing her admiration of them, together with her astonishment that the speculation, of which they formed a part, should have attracted little notice of any sort, he answered as follows:—"I am delighted they afford any entertainment, for they are rather flimsily written, being done merely to oblige a friend: they were yoked to a great, ill-conditioned, lubberly, double-columned book, which they were as useful to tug along as a set of fleas would be to draw a mail-coach. It is very difficult to answer your ladyship's curious question concerning change of taste; but whether in young or old, it takes place insensibly without the parties being aware of it. A grand-aunt of my own, Mrs Keith of Ravelstone, who was a person of some condition, being a daughter of Sir John Swinton of Swinton—lived with unabated vigour of intellect to a very advanced age. She was very fond of reading, and enjoyed it to the last of her long life. One day she asked me, when we happened to be alone together, whether I had ever seen Mrs Behn's novels?—I confessed the charge.—Whether I could get her a sight of them?—I said, with

some hesitation, I believed I could; but that I did not think she would like either the manners, or the language, which approached too near that of Charles II.'s time to be quite proper reading. 'Nevertheless,' said the good old lady, 'I remember them being so much admired, and being so much interested in them myself, that I wish to look at them again.' To hear was to obey. So I sent Mrs Aphra Behn, curiously sealed up, with 'private and confidential' on the packet, to my gay old grand-aunt. The next time I saw her afterwards, she gave me back Aphra, properly wrapped up, with nearly these words:—'Take back your bonny Mrs Behn; and, if you will take my advice, put her in the fire, for I found it impossible to get through the very first novel. But is it not,' she said, 'a very odd thing that I, an old woman of eighty and upwards, sitting alone, feel myself ashamed to read a book which, sixty years ago, I have heard read aloud for the amusement of large circles, consisting of the first and most creditable society in London.' This, of course, was owing to the gradual improvement of the national taste and delicacy. The change that brings into and throws out of fashion particular styles of composition, is something of the same kind. It does not signify what the greater or less merit of the book is:—the reader, as Tony Lumpkin says, must be in a concatenation accordingly—the fashion, or the general taste, must have prepared him to be pleased, or put him on his guard against it. It is much like *dress*. If Clarissa should appear before a modern party in her lace ruffles and head-dress, or Lovelace in his wig, however genteelly powdered, I am afraid they would make no conquests; the fashion which makes conquests of us in other respects is very powerful in literary composition, and adds to the effect of some works, while in others it forms their sole merit."

Among other miscellaneous work of this autumn, Scott amused some leisure hours with writing a series of "Private Letters," supposed to have been discovered in the repositories of a Noble English Family, and giving a picture of manners in town and country during the early part of the reign of James I. These letters were printed as fast as he penned them, in a handsome quarto form, and he furnished the margin with a running commentary of notes, drawn up in the character of a disappointed chaplain, a keen Whig, or rather Radical, overflowing on all occasions with spleen against Monarchy and Aristocracy. When the printing had reached the 72d page, however, he was told candidly by Erskine, by James Ballantyne, and also by myself, that, however clever his imitation of the epistolary style of the period in question, he was throwing away in these letters the materials of as good a romance as he had ever penned; and a few days afterwards he said to me—patting Sibyl's neck till she danced under him—"You were all quite right: if the letters had passed for genuine they would have found favour only with a few musty antiquaries, and if the joke were detected, there was not story enough to carry it off. I shall burn the sheets, and give you Bonny King Jamie and all his tail in the old shape, as soon as I can get Captain Goffe within view of the gallows."

Such was the origin of the "Fortunes of Nigel." As one set of the uncompleted Letters has been preserved, I shall here insert a specimen of them, in which the reader will easily recognise the germ of more than one scene of the novel.

"*Jenkin Harman to the Lord* ——.

"My Lord,

"Towching this new mishappe of Sir Thomas, whereof your Lordshippe makes querie of me, I wolde hartilie that I could, truth

and my bounden dutie alweys firste satisfied, make suche answer as were fullie plesaunte to me to write, or unto your Lordshippe to reade. But what remedy? young men will have stirring bloodes; and the courtier-like gallants of the time will be gamesome and dangerous, as they have bene in dayes past. I think your Lordshippe is so wise, as to caste one eye backe to your own more juvenile time, whilest you looke forward with the other upon this mischaunce, which, upon my lyfe, will be founde to be no otherwise harmful to Sir Thomas than as it shews him an hastie Hotspur of the day, suddenlie checking at whatsoever may seem to smirche his honour. As I am a trew man, and your Lordship's poore kinsman and bounden servant, I think ther lives not a gentleman more trew to his friende than Sir Thomas; and although ye be but brothers uterine, yet so dearly doth he holde your favour, that his father, were the gode knight alyve, should not have more swaye with him than shalle your Lordship; and, also, it is no kindly part to sow discord betwene brethrene; for, as the holy Psalmist saythe, '*Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres*,' &c. And moreover, it nedes not to tell your Lordshippe that Sir Thomas is suddene in his anger; and it was but on Wednesday last that he said to me, with moche distemperature,—Master Jenkin, I be tolde that ye meddle and make betwene me and my Lorde my brother; wherfore, take this for feyr warninge, that when I shall fynde you so dooying, I will incontinent put my dager to the hilte in you:—and this was spoken with all ernestness of visage and actioun, grasping of his poinard's handle, as one who wolde presentlie make his words good. Surely, my Lord, it is not fair carriage towarde your pore kinsman if anie out of your house make such reports of me, and of that which I have written to you in sympleness of herte, and in obedience to your commandemente, which is my law on this matter. Truely, my Lord, I wolde this was well looked to, otherweys my rewarde for trew service might be to handsell with my herte's blode the steel of a Milan poignado. Natheless, I will procede with my mater, fal back fal edge, trustyng all utterly in the singleness of my integretie, and in your Lordshippe's discretioun.

" My Lorde, the braule which hath befallen chaunced this waye, and not otherwise. It hap'd that one Raines, the master of the ordinarie where his honour Sir Thomas eteth well nie dailie (when he is not in attendance at courte, wherein he is perchance more slacke than were wise), shoulde assemble some of the beste who haunte his house, havyng diet ther for money. The purpose, as shewn forthe, was to tast a new piece of choice wyne, and ther Sir

Thomas must nedes be, or the purpos holdes not, and the Alicant becometh Bastard. Wel, my Lord, dice ther wer and music, lustie helthes and dizzie braines,—some saye fair ladyes also, of which I know nought, save that suche cockatrices hatch wher such cockes of the game do haunt. Alweys ther was revel and wassail enow and to spare. Now it chaunced, that whilst one Dutton, of Graie's-Inn, an Essex man, held the dice, Sir Thomas fillethe a fulle carouse to the helth of the fair Ladie Elizabeth. Trulie, my Lord, I cannot blame his devotioun to so fair a saint, though I may wish the chapel for his adoration had been better chosen, and the companie more suitable; *sed respice finem.* The pledge being given, and alle men on foote, aye, and some on knee, to drink the same, young Philip Darcy, a near kinsman of my Lorde's, or so callyng himself, takes on him to check at the helthe, askyng Sir Thomas if he were willinge to drink the same in a Venetian glasse? the mening of whiche hard sentence your Lordshippe shal esilie construe. Whereupon Sir Thomas, your Lordshippe's brother, somewhat shrewishly demanded whether that were his game or his ernest; to which demaunde the uther answers recklessly as he that wolde not be brow-beaten, that Sir Thomas might take it for game or ernest as him listed. Whereupon your Lordshippe's brother, throwing down withal the woodcocke's bill, with which, as the fashioun goes, he was picking his teeth, answered redily, he cared not that for his game or ernest, for that neither were worth a bean. A small matter this to make such a storie, for presentlie young Darcie up with the wine-pot in which they had assaid the freshe hogshede, and heveth it at Sir Thomas, which vessel missing of the mark it was aym'd at, encountreth the hede of Master Dutton, when the outside of the flaggon did that which peradventure the inside had accomplish'd somewhat later in the evening, and stretcheth him on the flore; and then the crie arose, and you might see twenty swords oute at once, and none rightly knowing wherfor. And the groomes and valets, who waited in the street and in the kitchen, and who, as seldom failes, had been as besy with the beer as their masters with the wine, presentlie fell at odds, and betoke themselves to their weapones; so ther was bouncing of bucklers, and bandying of blades instede of clattering of quart pottles, and chiming of harpis and fiddles. At length comes the wache, and, as oft happens in the like affraies, alle men join ageynst them, and they are beten bak: An honest man, David Booth, constable of the night, and a chandler by trade, is sorely hurt. The crie rises of Prentices, prentices, Clubs, clubs, for word went that the court-gallants and the Graie's-Inn men had murther'd

a citizen; all menne take the streèt, and the whole ward is uppe, none well knowing why. Menewhile our gallants had the lucke and sense to disperse their company, some getting them into the Temple, the gates wherof were presentlie shut to prevent pursuite I warrant, and some taking boat as they might; water thus saving whom wyne hath endaunger'd. The Alderman of the ward, worthy Master Danvelt, with Master Deputy, and others of repute, bestow'd themselves not a litel to compose the tumult, and so al past over for the evening.

" My Lord, this is the hole of the mater, so far as my earnest and anxious serch had therein, as well for the sake of my blode-relation to your honourable house, as frome affectioun to my kinsman Sir Thomas, and especiallie in humble obedience to your regarded commandes. As for other offence given by Sir Thomas, whereof idle bruites are current, as that he should have call'd Master Darcie a codshead or an woodcocke, I can lerne of no such termes, nor anie nere to them, only that when he said he cared not for his game or ernest, he flung down the woodcock's bill, to which it may be there was sticking a part of the head, though my informant saithe otherwise; and he stode so close by Sir Thomas, that he herde the quart-pot whissel as it flew betwixt there too hedes. Of damage done among the better sort, there is not muche; some cuts and thrusts ther wer, that had their sequents in blood and woundes, but none dedlie. Of the rascal sort, one fellowe is kill'd, and sundrie hurt. Hob Hilton, your brother's grome, for life a maymed man, having a slash over the right hande, for faulte of a gauntlet.—Marry he has been a brave knave and a sturdie: and if it pleses your goode Lordshippe, I fynd he wolde gladlie be prefer'd, when tym is fitting, to the office of bedle. He hath a burlie frame, and scare-babe visage; he shall do wel enoughe in such charge, though lackyng the use of four fingers.* The hurtyng of the constabel is a worse mater; as also the anger that is between the courtiers and Graie's-Inn men; so that yf close hede be not given, I doubt me we shall here of more *Gesta Graiorum.* Thei will not be persuaded but that the quarrel betwixt Sir Thomas and young Darcie was simulate; and that Master Dutton's hurte wes wilful; whereas, on my lyfe, it will not be founde so.

* " The death of the *rascal* sort is mentioned as he would have commemorated that of a dog; and his readiest plan of providing for a profligate menial, is to place him in superintendence of the unhappy poor, over whom his fierce looks, and rough demeanour are to supply the means of authority, which his arm can no longer enforce by actual violence !".

"The counseyl hath taen the matter up, and I here H. M. spoke many things gravely and solidly, and as one who taketh to hert such unhappie chaunces, both against brauling and drinking. Sir Thomas, with others, hath put in plegge to be forthcoming; and so strictly taken up wes the unhappie mater of the Scots Lord,* that if Booth shulde die, which God forefend, there might be a fereful reckoning: For one cityzen sayeth, I trust falslie, he saw Sir Thomas draw back his hand, having in it a drawn sword, just as the constabel felle. It seems but too constant, that thei were within but short space of ech other when this unhappy chaunce befel. My Lord, it is not for me to saie what course your Lordshippe should steer in this storm, onlie that the Lord Chansellour's gode worde wil, as resen is, do yeman's service. Schulde it come to fine or imprisonment, as is to be fered, why should not your Lordshippe cast the weyght into the balance for that restraint which goode Sir Thomas must nedes bear himself, rather than for such penalty as must nedes pinche the purses of his frendes. Your Lordship always knoweth best; but surely the yonge knyght hath but litel reson to expect that you shulde further engage yourself in such bondes as might be necessary to bring this fine into the Chequer. Nether have wise men helde it unfit that heated bloode be coold by sequestration for a space from temptation. There is dout, moreover, whether he may not hold himself bounden, according to the forme of faythe which such gallants and stirring spirits profess, to have further meeting with Master Philip Darcie, or this same Dutton, or with bothe, on this rare dependance of an woodcocke's hede, and a quart-pot; certeynly, methoughte, the last tym we met, and when he bare himself towards me, as I have premonish'd your Lordshippe, that he was fitter for quiet residence under safe keeping, than for a free walk amongst peceful men.

"And thus, my Lord, ye have the whole mater before you; trew ye shall find it,—my dutie demands it,—unpleasing, I cannot amende it: But I truste neither more evil *in esse* nor *in posse*, than I have set forth as above. From one, who is ever your Lordshippe's most bounden to command, &c.—J. H."

I think it must have been about the middle of October that he dropped the scheme of this fictitious correspondence. I well remember the morning that he began

* "Perhaps the case of Lord Sanquhar. His Lordship had the misfortune to be hanged, for causing a poor fencing-master to be assassinated, which seems the unhappy matter alluded to."

the Fortunes of Nigel. The day being destined for Newark Hill, I went over to Abbotsford before breakfast, and found Mr Terry (who had been staying there for some time) walking about with his friend's master-mason, of whose proceedings he took a fatherly charge, as he might well do, since the plan of the building had been in a considerable measure the work of his own taste. While Terry and I were chatting, Scott came out, bare-headed, with a bunch of MS. in his hand, and said, "Well, lads, I've laid the keel of a new lugger this morning—here it is—be off to the water-side, and let me hear how you like it." Terry took the papers, and walking up and down by the river, read to me the first chapter of Nigel. He expressed great delight with the animated opening, and especially with the contrast between its thorough stir of London life, and a chapter about Norna of the Fitful-Head, in the third volume of the Pirate, which had been given to him in a similar manner the morning before. I could see that (according to the Sheriff's phrase) *he smelt roast meat;* here there was every prospect of a fine field for the art of *Terryfication.* The actor, when our host met us returning from the haugh, did not fail to express his opinion that the new novel would be of this quality. Sir Walter, as he took the MS. from his hand, eyed him with a gay smile, in which genuine benevolence mingled with mock exultation, and then throwing himself into an attitude of comical dignity, he rolled out in the tones of John Kemble, one of the loftiest bursts of Ben Jonson's Mammon—

> "Come on, sir. Now you set your foot on shore
> In *Novo orbe*—
> ——————Pertinax, my Surly,*

* The fun of this application of "my Surly" will not escape any one who remembers the kind and good-humoured Terry's power of

Again I say to thee aloud, Be rich,
This day thou shalt have ingots."—

This was another period of "refreshing the machine." Early in November, I find Sir Walter writing thus to Constable's partner, Mr Cadell: "I want two books, Malcolm's London Redivivus, or some such name, and Derham's Artificial Clockmaker." [The reader of Nigel will understand these requests.] "All good luck to you, commercially and otherwise. I am grown a shabby letter-writer, for my eyes are not so young as they were, and I grudge every thing that does not go to press." Such a feeling must often have been present with him; yet I can find no period when he grudged writing a letter that might by possibility be of use to any of his family or friends; and I must quote one of the many which about this very time reached his second son.

*To Mr Charles Scott, care of the Rev. Mr Williams, Lampeter.*

"21st Nov. 1821.

"My dear Charles,

"I had the pleasure of your letter two days since, being the first symptom of your being alive and well which I have had *directly* since you left Abbotsford. I beg you will be more frequent in your communications, which must always be desirable when you are at such a distance. I am very glad to hear you are attending closely to make up lost time. Sport is a good thing both for health and pastime; but you must never allow it to interfere with serious study. You have, my dear boy, your own fortune to make, with better assistance of every kind than I had when the world first opened on

assuming a peculiarly saturnine aspect. This queer grimness of look was invaluable to the comedian in several of his best parts; and in private he often called it up when his heart was most cheerful.

me; and I assure you that had I not given some attention to learning (I have often regretted that, from want of opportunity, indifferent health, and some indolence, I did not do all I might have done), my own situation, and the advantages which I may be able to procure for you, would have been very much bounded. Consider, therefore, study as the principal object. Many men have read and written their way to independence and fame; but no man ever gained it by exclusive attention to exercises or to pleasures of any sort. You do not say any thing of your friend Mr Surtees,* who I hope is well. We all remember him with much affection, and should be sorry to think we were forgotten.

"Our Abbotsford hunt went off extremely well. We killed seven hares, I think, and our dogs behaved very well. A large party dined, and we sat down about twenty-five at table. Every gentleman present sung a song, *tant bien que mal*, excepting Walter, Lockhart, and I myself. I believe I should add the melancholy Jaques, Mr Waugh, who, on this occasion, however, was not melancholy.† In short, we had a very merry and social party.

"There is, I think, no news here. The hedger, Captain Davidson,‡ has had a bad accident, and injured

* Mr Villiers Surtees, a school-fellow of Charles Scott's at Lampeter, had spent the vacation of this year at Abbotsford. He is now one of the Supreme Judges at the Mauritius.

† Mr Waugh was a retired West Indian, of very dolorous aspect, who had settled at Melrose, built a large house there, surrounded it and his garden with a huge wall, and seldom emerged from his own precincts except upon the grand occasion of the Abbotsford Hunt. The villagers called him "the Melancholy Man"—and considered him as already "dreein' his dole for doings amang the poor niggers."

‡ This hedger had got the title of Captain, in memory of his gallantry at some *row*.

his leg much by the fall of a large stone. I am very anxious about him as a faithful and honest servant. Every one else at Abbotsford, horses and dogs included, are in great preservation.

" You ask me about reading history. You are quite right to read Clarendon—his style is a little long-winded; but, on the other hand, his characters may match those of the ancient historians, and one thinks they would know the very men if you were to meet them in society. Few English writers have the same precision, either in describing the actors in great scenes, or the deeds which they performed. He was, you are aware, himself deeply engaged in the scenes which he depicts, and therefore colours them with the individual feeling, and sometimes, doubtless, with the partiality of a partisan. Yet I think he is, on the whole, a fair writer; for though he always endeavours to excuse King Charles, yet he points out his mistakes and errors, which certainly were neither few nor of slight consequence. Some of his history regards the country in which you are now a resident; and you will find that much of the fate of that Great Civil War turned on the successful resistance made by the city of Gloucester, and the relief of that place by the Earl of Essex, by means of the trained bands of London, a sort of force resembling our local militia or volunteers. They are the subject of ridicule in all the plays and poems of the time; yet the sort of practice of arms which they had acquired enabled them to withstand the charge of Prince Rupert and his gallant cavalry, who were then foiled for the first time. Read, my dear Charles, read, and read that which is useful. Man only differs from birds and beasts, because he has the means of availing himself of the knowledge acquired by his predecessors. The swallow builds the same nest which its father and mother built; and the

sparrow does not improve by the experience of its parents. The son of the learned pig, if it had one, would be a mere brute, fit only to make bacon of. It is not so with the human race. Our ancestors lodged in caves and wigwams, where we construct palaces for the rich, and comfortable dwellings for the poor; and why is this—but because our eye is enabled to look back upon the past, to improve upon our ancestors' improvements, and to avoid their errors? This can only be done by studying history, and comparing it with passing events. God has given you a strong memory and the power of understanding that which you give your mind to with attention—but all the advantage to be derived from these qualities must depend on your own determination to avail yourself of them, and improve them to the uttermost. That you should do so will be the greatest satisfaction I can receive in my advanced life, and when my thoughts must be entirely turned on the success of my children. Write to me more frequently, and mention your studies particularly, and I will on my side be a good correspondent.

"I beg my compliments to Mr and Mrs Williams; I have left no room to sign myself your affectionate father, W. S."

To return to business and Messrs Constable. Sir Walter concluded before he went to town in November another negotiation of importance with this house. They agreed to give for the remaining copyright of the four novels published between December 1819 and January 1821—to wit, Ivanhoe, the Monastery, the Abbot, and Kenilworth—the sum of five thousand guineas. The stipulation about not revealing the author's name, under a penalty of L.2000, was repeated. By these four novels, the fruits of scarcely more than twelve months' labour,

he had already cleared at least L.10,000 before this bargain was completed. They, like their predecessors, were now issued in a collective shape, under the title of "*Historical Romances*, by the Author of Waverley."

I cannot pretend to guess what the actual state of Scott's pecuniary affairs was at the time when John Ballantyne's death relieved them from one great source of complication and difficulty. But I have said enough to satisfy every reader, that when he began the second, and far the larger division of his building at Abbotsford, he must have contemplated the utmost sum it could cost him as a mere trifle in relation to the resources at his command. He must have reckoned on clearing L.30,000 at least in the course of a couple of years by the novels written within such a period. The publisher of his Tales, who best knew how they were produced, and what they brought of gross profit, and who must have had the strongest interest in keeping the author's name untarnished by any risk or reputation of failure, would willingly, as we have seen, have given him L.6000 more within a space of two years for works of a less serious sort, likely to be despatched at leisure hours, without at all interfering with the main manufacture. But alas!—even this was not all. Messrs Constable had such faith in the prospective fertility of his imagination, that they were by this time quite ready to sign bargains and grant bills for novels and romances to be produced hereafter, but of which the subjects and the names were alike unknown to them and to the man from whose pen they were to proceed. A forgotten satirist well says,

> "The active principle within
> Works on some brains the effect of gin;"

but in his case, every external influence combined to stir the flame, and swell the intoxication of restless exuberant energy. His allies knew, indeed, what he did

not, that the sale of his novels was rather less than it had been in the days of Ivanhoe; and hints had sometimes been dropped to him that it might be well to try the effects of a pause. But he always thought—and James Ballantye had decidedly the same opinion—that his best things were those which he threw off the most easily and swiftly; and it was no wonder that his booksellers, seeing how immeasurably even his worst excelled in popularity, as in merit, any other person's best, should have shrunk from the experiment of a decisive damper. On the contrary, they might be excused for from time to time flattering themselves that if the books sold at a less rate, this might be counterpoised by still greater rapidity of production. They could not make up their minds to cast the peerless vessel adrift; and, in short, after every little whisper of prudential misgiving, echoed the unfailing burden of Ballantyne's song—to push on, hoisting more and more sail as the wind lulled.

He was as eager to do as they could be to suggest—and this I well knew at the time. I had, however, no notion, until all his correspondence lay before me, of the extent to which he had permitted himself thus early to build on the chances of life, health, and continued popularity. Before the Fortunes of Nigel issued from the press, Scott had exchanged instruments, and received his bookseller's bills, for no less than four "works of fiction"—not one of them otherwise described in the deeds of agreement—to be produced in unbroken succession, each of them to fill at least three volumes, but with proper saving clauses as to increase of copy-money, in case any of them should run to four. And within two years all this anticipation had been wiped off by Peveril of the Peak, Quentin Durward, St Ronan's Well, and Redgauntlet; and the new castle was by that time complete, and overflowing with all its splendour; but by that time the end also was approaching!

The splendid Romance of the Pirate was published in the beginning of December, 1821; and the wild freshness of its atmosphere, the beautiful contrast of Minna and Brenda, and the exquisitely drawn character of Captain Cleveland, found the reception which they deserved. The work was analyzed with remarkable care in the Quarterly Review—by a critic second to few, either in the manly heartiness of his sympathy with the felicities of genius, or in the honest acuteness of his censure in cases of negligence and confusion. This was the second of a series of articles in that Journal, conceived and executed in a tone widely different from those given by Mr Gifford himself to Waverley, Guy Mannering, and the Antiquary. I fancy the old gentleman had become convinced that he had made a grievous mistake in this matter, before he acquiesced in Scott's proposal about "quartering the child" in January 1816; and if he was fortunate in finding a contributor able and willing to treat the rest of Father Jedediah's progeny with excellent skill, and in a spirit more accordant with the just and general sentiments of the public, we must also recognise a pleasing and honourable trait of character in the frankness with which the recluse and often despotic editor now resigned the pen to Mr Senior.

On the 13th December Sir Walter received a copy of CAIN, as yet unpublished, from Lord Byron's bookseller, who had been instructed to ask whether he had any objection to having the "Mystery" dedicated to him. He replied in these words:—

*To John Murray, Esq., Albemarle Street, London.*

"Edinburgh, 17th December, 1821.

"My dear Sir,

"I accept with feelings of great obligation the flattering proposal of Lord Byron to prefix my name to

the very grand and tremendous drama of Cain. I may be partial to it, and you will allow I have cause; but I do not know that his Muse has ever taken so lofty a flight amid her former soarings. He has certainly matched Milton on his own ground. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers, whose tone will be adopted by others out of affectation or envy. But then they must condemn the Paradise Lost, if they have a mind to be consistent. The fiend-like reasoning and bold blasphemy of the fiend and of his pupil, lead exactly to the point which was to be expected—the commission of the first murder, and the ruin and despair of the perpetrator.

"I do not see how any one can accuse the author himself of Manicheism. The devil takes the language of that sect, doubtless; because, not being able to deny the existence of the Good Principle, he endeavours to exalt himself—the Evil Principle—to a seeming equality with the Good; but such arguments, in the mouth of such a being, can only be used to deceive and to betray. Lord Byron might have made this more evident, by placing in the mouth of Adam, or of some good and protecting spirit, the reasons which render the existence of moral evil consistent with the general benevolence of the Deity. The great key to the mystery is, perhaps, the imperfection of our own faculties, which see and feel strongly the partial evils which press upon us, but know too little of the general system of the universe, to be aware how the existence of these is to be reconciled with the benevolence of the great Creator.—Ever yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

In some preceding narratives of Sir Walter Scott's Life, I find the principal feature for 1821 to be an affair

of which I have as yet said nothing; and which, notwithstanding the examples I have before me, I must be excused for treating on a scale commensurate with his real share and interest therein. I allude to an unfortunate newspaper, by name *The Beacon*, which began to be published in Edinburgh in January 1821, and was abruptly discontinued in the August of the same year. It originated in the alarm with which the Edinburgh Tories contemplated the progress of Radical doctrines during the agitation of the Queen's business in 1820—and the want of any adequate counteraction on the part of the Ministerial newspapers in the north. James Ballantyne had on that occasion swerved from his banner—and by so doing given not a little offence to Scott. He approved, therefore, of the project of a new Weekly Journal, to be conducted by some steadier hand; and when it was proposed to raise the requisite capital for the speculation by private subscription, expressed his willingness to contribute whatever sum should be named by other gentlemen of his standing. This was accepted of course; but every part of the advice with which the only man in the whole conclave that understood a jot about such things coupled his tender of alliance, was departed from in practice. No experienced and responsible editor of the sort he pointed out as indispensable was secured; the violence of disaffected spleen was encountered by a vein of satire which seemed more fierce than frolicsome; the Law Officers of the Crown, whom he had most strenuously cautioned against any participation in the concern, were rash enough to commit themselves in it; the subscribers, like true Scotchmen, in place of paying down their money and thinking no more of that part of the matter, chose to put their names to a bond of security on which the sum total was to be advanced by bankers, and thus by their own over-

caution as to a few pounds laid the foundation for a long train of humiliating distresses and disgraces; and finally, when the rude drollery of the young hot-bloods to whom they had entrusted the editorship of their paper produced its natural consequences, and the ferment of Whig indignation began to boil over upon the dignified patrons of what was denounced as a systematic scheme of calumny and defamation—these seniors shrunk from the dilemma as rashly as they had plunged into it, and instead of compelling the juvenile allies to adopt a more prudent course, and gradually give the journal a tone worthy of open approbation, they, at the first blush of personal difficulty, left their instruments in the lurch, and, without even consulting Scott, ordered the Beacon to be extinguished at an hour's notice.

A more pitiable mass of blunder and imbecility was never heaped together than the whole of this affair exhibited; and from a very early period Scott was so disgusted with it that he never even saw the newspaper, of which Whigs and Radicals believed, or affected to believe, that the conduct and management were in some degree at least under his dictation. The results were lamentable: the Beacon was made the subject of Parliamentary discussion, from which the then heads of Scotch Toryism did not escape in any very consolatory plight; but above all, the Beacon bequeathed its rancour and rashness, though not its ability, to a Glasgow Paper of similar form and pretensions, entitled The Sentinel. By that organ the personal quarrels of the Beacon were taken up and pursued with relentless industry; and finally, the Glasgow editors disagreeing, some moment of angry confusion betrayed a box of MSS., by which the late Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck was revealed as the writer of certain truculent enough pasquinades. A leading Edinburgh Whig, who had been

pilloried in one or more of these, challenged Boswell—and the Baronet fell in as miserable a quarrel as ever cost the blood of a high-spirited gentleman.

This tragedy occurred in the early part of 1822; and soon afterwards followed those debates on the whole business in the House of Commons, for which, if any reader feels curiosity about them, I refer him to the Parliamentary Histories of the time. A single extract from one of Scott's letters to a member of the then Government in London will be sufficient for my purpose; and abundantly confirm what I have said as to his personal part in the affairs of the Beacon.

*To J. W. Croker, Esq., Admiralty.*

" My dear Croker,

" . . . . I had the fate of Cassandra in the Beacon matter from beginning to end. I endeavoured in vain to impress on them the necessity of having an editor who was really up to the business, and could mix spirit with discretion—one of those " gentlemen of the press," who understand the exact lengths to which they can go in their vocation. Then I wished them in place of that *Bond*, to have each thrown down his hundred pounds, and never enquired more about it—and lastly, I exclaimed against the Crown Counsel being at all concerned. In the two first remonstrances I was not listened to—in the last I thought myself successful, and it was not till long afterwards that I heard they had actually subscribed the Bond. Then the hasty renunciation of the thing, as if we had been doing something very atrocious, put me mad altogether. The younger brethren too, allege that they are put into the front of the fight, and deserted on the first pinch; and on my word I cannot say the accusation is altogether false, though I have been doing my best to mediate betwixt the par-

ties, and keep the peace if possible. The fact is, it is a blasted business, and will continue long to have bad consequences.—Yours in all love and kindness,

WALTER SCOTT."

## CHAPTER VII.

WILLIAM ERSKINE PROMOTED TO THE BENCH—JOANNA BAILLIE'S MISCELLANY—HALIDON HILL AND MACDUFF'S CROSS—LETTERS TO LORD MONTAGU—LAST PORTRAIT BY RAEBURN—CONSTABLE'S LETTER ON THE APPEARANCE OF THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL—HALIDON HILL PUBLISHED.

1822.

In January 1822 Sir Walter had the great satisfaction of seeing Erskine at length promoted to a seat on the Bench of the Court of Session, by the title of Lord Kinnedder; and his pleasure was enhanced doubtless by the reflection that his friend owed this elevation very much, if not mainly, to his own unwearied exertions on his behalf. This happy event occurred just about the time when Joanna Baillie was distressed by hearing of the sudden and total ruin of an old friend of hers, a Scotch gentleman long distinguished in the commerce of the city of London; and she thought of collecting among her literary acquaintance such contributions as might, with some gleanings of her own portfolios, fill up a volume of poetical miscellanies, to be published, by subscription, for the benefit of the merchant's family. In requesting Sir Walter to write something for this purpose, she also asked him to communicate the scheme, in her name, to various common friends in the North—among others, to the new Judge. Scott's answer was—

*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

" Edinburgh, Feb. 10, 1822.

" My Dear Friend,

" No one has so good a title as you to command me in all my strength, and in all my weakness. I do not believe I have a single scrap of unpublished poetry, for I was never a willing composer of occasional pieces, and when I have been guilty of such effusions, it was to answer the purpose of some publisher of songs, or the like immediate demand. The consequence is, that all these trifles have been long before the public, and whatever I add to your collection must have the grace of novelty, in case it should have no other. I do not know what should make it rather a melancholy task for me nowadays to sit down to versify—I did not use to think it so—but I have ceased, I know not why, to find pleasure in it, and yet I do not think I have lost any of the faculties I ever possessed for the task; but I was never fond of my own poetry, and am now much out of conceit with it. All this another person less candid in construction than yourself would interpret into a hint to send a good dose of praise—but you know we have agreed long ago to be above ordinances, like Cromwell's saints. When I go to the country upon the 12th of March, I will try what the water-side can do for me, for there is no inspiration in causeways and kennels, or even the Court of Session. You have the victory over me now, for I remember laughing at you for saying you could only write your beautiful lyrics upon a fine warm day. But what is this something to be? I wish you would give me a subject, for that would cut off half my difficulties.

" I am delighted with the prospect of seeing Miss Edgeworth, and making her personal acquaintance. I expect her to be just what you describe, a being totally void of affectation, and who, like one other lady

of my acquaintance, carries her literary reputation as freely and easily as the milk-maid in my country does the *leglen*, which she carries on her head, and walks as gracefully with it as a duchess. Some of the fair sex, and some of the foul sex, too, carry their renown in London fashion on a yoke and a pair of pitchers. The consequence is, that besides poking frightfully, they are hitting every one on the shins with their buckets. Now this is all nonsense, too fantastic to be written to any body but a person of good sense. By the way, did you know Miss Austen, authoress of some novels which have a great deal of nature in them?—nature in ordinary and middle life, to be sure, but valuable from its strong resemblance and correct drawing. I wonder which way she carried her pail? *

"I did indeed rejoice at Erskine's promotion. There is a degree of melancholy attending the later stage of a barrister's profession, which, though no one cares for sentimentalities attendant on a man of fifty or thereabout, in a rusty black bombazine gown, are not the less cruelly felt; their business sooner or later fails, for younger men will work cheaper, and longer, and harder—besides

* When the late collection of Sir Walter Scott's Prose Miscellanies was preparing, the publisher of the Quarterly Review led me into a mistake, which I may as well take this opportunity of apologizing for. Glancing hastily over his private records, he included in his list of Sir Walter's contributions to his journal an article on Miss Austen's novels; and as the opinions which the article expresses on their merits and defects harmonized with the usual tone of Scott's conversation, I saw no reason to doubt that he had drawn it up, although the style might have been considerably *doctored* by Mr Gifford. I have since learned that the reviewal was in fact written by Dr Whateley, now Archbishop of Dublin.—Miss Austen's novels, especially Emma and Northanger Abbey, were great favourites with Scott, and he often read chapters of them to his evening circle.

that the cases are few, comparatively, in which senior counsel are engaged, and it is not etiquette to ask any one in that advanced age to take the whole burden of a cause. Insensibly, without decay of talent, and without losing the public esteem, there is a gradual decay of employment, which almost no man ever practised thirty years without experiencing; and thus the honours and dignities of the Bench, so hardly earned, and themselves leading but to toils of another kind, are peculiarly desirable. Erskine would have sat there ten years ago, but for wretched intrigues. He has a very poetical and elegant mind, but I do not know of any poetry of his writing, except some additional stanzas to Collins' ode on Scottish superstitions, long since published in the Border Minstrelsy. I doubt it would not be consistent with his high office to write poetry now, but you may add his name with Mrs Scott's (Heaven forgive me! I should have said Lady Scott's) and mine to the subscription-list. I will not promise to get you more, for people always look as if you were asking the guinea for yourself—there John Bull has the better of Sawney; to be sure he has more guineas to bestow, but we retain our reluctance to part with hard cash, though profuse enough in our hospitality. I have seen a laird, after giving us more champagne and claret than we cared to drink, look pale at the idea of paying a crown in charity.

"I am seriously tempted, though it would be sending coals to Newcastle with a vengeance, not to mention salt to Dysart, and all other superfluous importations—I am, I say, strangely tempted to write for your Protegés a dramatic scene on an incident which happened at the battle of Halidon Hill (I think). It was to me a nursery-tale, often told by Mrs Margaret Swinton, sister of my maternal grandmother; a fine old lady of high blood, and of as high a mind, who was lineally descended from

one of the actors. The anecdote was briefly thus. The family of Swinton is very ancient, and was once very powerful, and at the period of this battle the knight of Swinton was gigantic in stature, unequalled in strength, and a sage and experienced leader to boot. In one of those quarrels which divided the kingdom of Scotland in every corner, he had slain his neighbour, the head of the Gordon family, and an inveterate feud had ensued; for it seems that powerful as the Gordons always were, the Swintons could then bide a bang with them. Well, the battle of Halidon began, and the Scottish army, unskilfully disposed on the side of a hill where no arrow fell in vain, was dreadfully galled by the archery of the English, as usual; upon which Swinton approached the Scottish General, requesting command of a body of cavalry, and pledging his honour that he would, if so supported, charge and disperse the English archers—one of the manœuvres by which Bruce gained the battle of Bannockburn. This was refused, out of stupidity or sullenness, by the General, on which Swinton expressed his determination to charge at the head of his own followers, though totally inadequate for the purpose. The young Gordon heard the proposal, son of him whom Swinton had slain, and with one of those irregular bursts of generosity and feeling which redeem the dark ages from the character of utter barbarism, he threw himself from his horse, and kneeled down before Swinton.—'I have not yet been knighted,' he said, 'and never can I take the honour from the hand of a truer, more loyal, more valiant leader, than he who slew my father: grant me,' he said, 'the boon I ask, and I unite my forces to yours, that we may live and die together.' His feudal enemy became instantly his godfather in chivalry, and his ally in battle. Swinton knighted the young Gordon, and they rushed down at

the head of their united retainers, dispersed the archery, and would have turned the battle, had they been supported. At length they both fell, and all who followed them were cut off, and it was remarked, that while the fight lasted, the old giant guarded the young man's life more than his own, and the same was indicated by the manner in which his body lay stretched over that of Gordon. Now, do not laugh at my Berwickshire *burr*, which I assure you is literally and lineally handed down to me by my grandmother, from this fine old Goliah. Tell me, if I can clamper up the story into a sort of single scene, will it answer your purpose? I would rather try my hand in blank verse than rhyme.

"The story, with many others of the same kind, is consecrated to me by the remembrance of the narrator, with her brown silk gown, and triple ruffles, and her benevolent face, which was always beside our beds when there were childish complaints among us. Poor Aunt Margaret had a most shocking fate, being murdered by a favourite maid-servant in a fit of insanity, when I was about ten years old; the catastrophe was much owing to the scrupulous delicacy and high courage of my poor relation, who would not have the assistance of men called in for exposing the unhappy wretch her servant. I think you will not ask for a letter from me in a hurry again, but, as I have no chance of seeing you for a long time, I must be contented with writing. My kindest respects attend Mrs Agnes, your kind brother and family, and the Richardsons, little and big, short and tall; and believe me most truly yours,

W. Scott.

"P.S.—Sophia is come up to her Sunday dinner, and begs to send a thousand remembrances, with the important intelligence that her baby actually says ma-ma, and

bow wow, when he sees the dog. Moreover, he is christened John Hugh; and I intend to plant two little knolls at their cottage, to be called Mount Saint John, and Hugomont. The Papa also sends his respects."

About this time Cornet Scott, being for a short period in Edinburgh, sat to William Allan for that admirable portrait which now hangs (being the only picture in the room) over the mantelpiece of the Great Library at Abbotsford. Sir Walter, in extolling this performance to Lord Montagu, happened to mention that an engraving was about to appear from Mr Allan's "Death of Archbishop Sharp," and requested his lordship to subscribe for a copy of it. Lord Montagu read his letter hurriedly, and thought the forthcoming engraving was of the Cornet and his charger. He signified that he would very gladly have *that;* but took occasion to remind Sir Walter, that the Buccleuch family had not forgot his old promise to sit to Raeburn himself for a portrait, to be hung up at Bowhill. Scott's letter of explanation includes his opinion of Horace Walpole's posthumous "Memoirs."

*To the Lord Montagu.*

"Abbotsford, 15th March, 1822.

"My dear Lord,

"It is close firing to reply to your kind letter so soon, but I had led your Lordship into two mistakes, from writing my former letter in a hurry; and therefore to try whether I cannot contradict the old proverb of 'two blacks not making a white,' I write this in a hurry to mend former blunders.

"In the first place, I never dreamed of asking you to subscribe to a print of my son—it will be time for him to be *copperplated*, as Joseph Gillon used to call

it, when he is major-general. I only meant to ask you to take a print of the Murder of Archbishop Sharp, and to mention historically that the same artist, who made a capital picture of that event, had painted for me a very good portrait of my son. I suppose I may apply your Lordship's kind permission to the work for which I *did* mean to require your patronage; and for a Scottish subject of interest by a Scottish artist of high promise, I will presume to reckon also on the patronage of my young chief. I had no idea of sitting for my own picture; and I think it will be as well to let Duke Walter, when he feels his own ground in the world, take his own taste in the way of adorning his house. Two or three years will make him an adequate judge on such a subject, and if they will not make me more beautiful, they have every chance of making me more picturesque. The distinction was ably drawn in the case of parsons' horses, by Sydney Smith, in one of his lectures:—'The rector's horse is *beautiful*—the curate's is picturesque.' If the portrait had been begun, that were another matter; as it is, the Duke, when he is two or three years older, shall command my picture, as the original, *à vendre et à pendre*—an admirable expression of devotion, which I picked up from a curious letter of Lord Lovat's, which I found the other day. I am greatly afraid the said original will by and by be fit only for the last branch of the dilemma.

"Have you read Lord Orford's History of his own Time—it is acid and lively, but serves, I think, to show how little those, who live in public business, and of course in constant agitation and intrigue, know about the real and deep progress of opinions and events. The Memoirs of our Scots Sir George Mackenzie are of the same class—both immersed in little political detail, and the struggling skirmish of party, seem to have lost sight of the great progressive movements of human affairs.

They put me somewhat in mind of a miller, who is so busy with the clatter of his own wheels, grindstones, and machinery, and so much employed in regulating his own artificial mill-dam, that he is incapable of noticing the gradual swell of the river from which he derives his little stream, until it comes down in such force as to carry his whole manufactory away before it. It is comical, too, that Lord Orford should have delayed trusting the public with his reminiscences, until so many years had destroyed all our interest in the Parliamentary and Court intrigues which he tells with so much vivacity. It is like a man who should brick up a hogshead of cyder, to be drunk half a century afterwards, when it could contain little but acidity and vapidity.

"I am here, thank God, for two months. I have acquired, as I trust, a good gardener,* warranted by Macdonald of Dalkeith. So the seeds, which your Lordship is so kind as to promise me, will be managed like a tansy. The greatest advance of age which I have yet found is liking a *cat*, an animal I detested, and becoming fond of a garden, an art which I despised—but I suppose the indulgent mother Nature has pets and hobby-horses suited to her children at all ages.—Ever, my dear Lord, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Acquiescing in the propriety of what Sir Walter had thus said respecting the proposed portrait for Bowhill, Lord Montagu requested him to sit without delay for a smaller picture on his own behalf; and the result was that half-length now at Ditton, which possesses a peculiar value and interest as being the very last work of

* Mr Bogie. This respectable person is now *seneschal* of Scott's deserted castle.

Raeburn's pencil. The poet's answer to Lord Montagu's request was as follows:—

*To the Lord Montagu.*

" Abbotsford, 27th March, 1822.

" My dear Lord,

" I should be very unworthy of so great a proof of your regard, did I not immediately assure you of the pleasure with which I will contribute the head you wish to the halls of Ditton. I know no place where the substance has been so happy, and, therefore, the shadow may be so far well placed. I will not suffer this important affair to languish so far as I am concerned, but will arrange with Raeburn when I return to Edinburgh in May. Allan is not in the ordinary habit of doing portraits, and as he is really a rising historical painter, I should be sorry to see him seduced into the lucrative branch which carries off most artists of that description. If he goes on as he has begun, the young Duke may one day patronise the Scottish Arts, so far as to order a picture of the " Releasing" of Kinmont Willie* from him. I agree entirely with your Lordship's idea of leaving the young chief to have the grace of forming his own ideas on many points, contenting yourself with giving him such principles as may enable him to judge rightly. I believe more youths of high expectation have bolted from the course, merely because well-meaning friends had taken too much care to *rope it in*, than from any other reason whatever. There is in youth a feeling of independence, a desire, in short, of being their own master, and enjoying their own free agency, which is

* See, in the Border Minstrelsy (vol. ii. p. 32), the capital old ballad on this dashing exploit of " the Bold Buccleuch " of Queen Elizabeth's time.

not always attended to by guardians and parents, and hence the best laid schemes fail in execution from being a little too prominently brought forward. I trust that Walter, with the good sense which he seems to possess, will never lose that most amiable characteristic of his father's family, the love and affection which all the members of it have, for two generations, borne to each other, and which has made them patterns as well as blessings to the country they lived in. I have few happier days to look forward to, and yet, like all happiness which comes to grey-headed men, it will have a touch of sorrow in it, than that in which he shall assume his high situation with the resolution which I am sure he will have to be a good friend to the country in which he has so large a stake, and to the multitudes which must depend upon him for protection, countenance, and bread. Selfish feelings are so much the fashion among fashionable men—it is accounted so completely absurd to do any thing which is not to contribute more or less directly to the immediate personal eclat or personal enjoyment of the party—that young men lose sight of real power and real importance, the foundation of which must be laid, even selfishly considered, in contributing to the general welfare,—like those who have thrown their bread on the waters, expecting, and surely receiving, after many days, its return in gratitude, attachment, and support of every kind. The memory of the most splendid entertainment passes away with the season, but the money and pains bestowed upon a large estate not only contribute to its improvement, but root the bestower in the hearts of hundreds over hundreds; should these become needful he is sure to exercise a correspondent influence. I cannot look forward to these as settled times. In the retrenchments proposed, Government agree to diminish

their own influence, and while they contribute a comparative trifle to the relief of the public burdens, are making new discontents among those who, for interest's sake at least, were their natural adherents. In this they are acting weakly, and trying to soothe the insatiate appetite of innovation, by throwing down their outworks, as if that which renders attack more secure and easy would diminish the courage of the assailants. Last year the manufacturing classes were rising—this year the agricultural interest is discontented, and whatever temporary relief either class receives will indeed render them quiet for the moment, but not erase from their minds the rooted belief that the government and constitution of this country are in fault for their embarrassments. Well, I cannot help it, and therefore will not think about it, for that at least I *can* help.

'Time and the hour run through the roughest day.'

"We have had dreadful tempests here of wind and rain, and for a variety a little snow. I assure you it is as uncommon to see a hill with snow on its top these two last seasons as to see a beau on the better side of thirty with powder in his hair. I built an ice-house last year and could get no ice to fill it—this year I took the opportunity of even poor twenty-four hours and packed it full of hard-rammed snow—but lo, ye—the snow is now *in meditatione fugæ*, and I wish I may have enough to cool a decanter when you come to Abbotsford, as I trust your Lordship will be likely to be here next autumn. It is worth while to come, were it but to see what a romance of a house I am making, which is neither to be castle nor abbey (God forbid!) but an old Scottish manor-house. I believe Atkinson is in despair with my whims, for he cries out *yes—yes—yes*—in a

tone which exactly signifies *no—no—no—by no manner of means.*—Believe me always, my dear Lord, most gratefully yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

At the commencement of this spring, then, Scott found his new edifice in rapid progress; and letters on that subject to and from Terry, occupy, during many subsequent months, a very large share in his correspondence. Before the end of the vacation, however, he had finished the MS. of his Nigel. Nor had he lost sight of his promise to Joanna Baillie. He produced, and that, as I well remember, in the course of two rainy mornings, the dramatic sketch of Halidon Hill; but on concluding it, he found that he had given it an extent quite incompatible with his friend's arrangements for her charitable pic-nic. He therefore cast about for another subject likely to be embraced in smaller compass; and the Blair-Adam meeting of the next June supplied him with one in Macduff's Cross. Meantime, on hearing a whisper about Halidon Hill, Messrs Constable, without seeing the MS., forthwith tendered L.1000 for the copyright—the same sum that had appeared almost irrationally munificent when offered in 1807 for the embryo Marmion. It was accepted, and a letter from Constable himself, about to be introduced, will show how well the head of the firm was pleased with this wild bargain. At the moment when his head was giddy with the popular applauses of the new-launched Nigel—and although he had been informed that *Peveril of the Peak* was already on the stocks—he suggested that a little pinnace, of the Halidon class, might easily be rigged out once a-quarter, by way of diversion, and thus add another L.4000 per annum to

the L.10 or L.15,000, on which all parties counted as the sure yearly profit of three-deckers *in fore*.

Before I quote Constable's effusion, however, I must recall to the reader's recollection some very gratifying, but I am sure perfectly sincere, laudation of him in his professional capacity, which the Author of the Fortunes of Nigel had put into the mouth of his Captain Clutterbuck in the humorous Epistle Introductory to that Novel. After alluding, in affectionate terms, to the recent death of John Ballantyne, the Captain adds,—"To this great deprivation has been added, I trust for a time only, the loss of another bibliopolical friend, whose vigorous intellect, and liberal ideas, have not only rendered his native country the mart of her own literature, but established there a court of letters, which must command respect, even from those most inclined to dissent from many of its canons. The effect of these changes operated in a great measure by the strong sense and sagacious calculations of an individual, who knew how to avail himself, to an unhoped for extent, of the various kinds of talent which his country produced, will probably appear more clearly to the generation which shall follow the present. I entered the shop at the Cross to enquire after the health of my worthy friend, and learned with satisfaction that his residence in the south had abated the rigour of the symptoms of his disorder."

It appears that Nigel was published on the 30th of May 1822; and next day Constable writes as follows from his temporary residence near London:—

*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Castle Street, Edinburgh.*

"Castlebeare Park, 31st May, 1822.

"Dear Sir Walter,

"I have received the highest gratification from the perusal of a certain new work. I may indeed say new

work, for it is entirely so, and will, if that be possible, eclipse in popularity all that has gone before it.

"The author will be blamed for one thing, however unreasonably, and that is, for concluding the story without giving his readers a little more of it. We are a set of ungrateful mortals. For one thing at least I trust I am never to be found so, for I must ever most duly appreciate the kind things intended to be applied to me in the Introductory Epistle to this work. I learn with astonishment, but not less delight, that the press is at work again; the title, which has been handed to me, is quite excellent.

"I am now so well as to find it compatible to pay my respects to some of my old haunts in the metropolis, where I go occasionally. I was in town yesterday, and so keenly were the people devouring my friend *Jingling Geordie*, that I actually saw them reading it in the streets as they passed along. I assure you there is no exaggeration in this. A new novel from the author of Waverley puts aside, in other words puts down for the time, every other literary performance. The Smack Ocean, by which the new work was shipped, arrived at the wharf on Sunday; the bales were got out by *one* on Monday morning, and before half-past ten o'clock 7000 copies had been dispersed from 90, Cheapside.* I sent my secretary on purpose to witness the activity with which such things are conducted, and to bring me the account, gratifying certainly, which I now give you.

"I went yesterday to the shop of a curious person—Mr Swaby, in Warden-street—to look at an old portrait which my son, when lately here, mentioned to me. It is, I think, a portrait of *James the Fourth*, and if not

* Constable's London agents, Messrs Hurst, Robinson, and Co., had then their premises in Cheapside.

an original, is doubtless a picture as early as his reign. Our friend Mr Thomson has seen it and is of the same opinion; but I purpose that you should be called upon to decide this nice point, and I have ordered it to be forwarded to you, trusting that erelong I may see it in the Armoury at Abbotsford.

"I found at the same place two large elbow chairs, elaborately carved, in boxwood—with figures, foliage, &c. perfectly entire. Mr Swaby, from whom I purchased them, assured me they came from the Borghese Palace at Rome; he possessed originally ten such chairs, and had sold six of them to the Duke of Rutland, for Belvoir Castle, where they will be appropriate furniture; the two which I have obtained would, I think, not be less so in the Library of Abbotsford.

"I have been so fortunate as to secure a still more curious article—a slab of mosaic pavement, quite entire and large enough to make an outer hearth-stone, which I also destine for Abbotsford. It occurred to me that these three articles might prove suitable to your taste, and under that impression I am now induced to take the liberty of requesting you to accept them as a small but sincere pledge of grateful feeling. Our literary connexion is too important to make it necessary for your publishers to trouble you about the pounds, shil lings, and pence of such things; and I therefore trust you will receive them on the footing I have thus taken the liberty to name. I have been on the outlook for antique carvings, and if I knew the purposes for which you would want such, I might probably be able to send you some.

"I was truly happy to hear of 'Halidon Hill,' and of the satisfactory arrangements made for its publication. I wish I had the power of prevailing with you to give us a similar production every three months; and that our ancient enemies on this side the Border might not

have too much their own way, perhaps your next dramatic sketch might be Bannockburn.* It would be presumptuous in me to point out subjects, but you know my craving to be great, and I cannot resist mentioning here that I should like to see a Battle of Hastings—a Cressy —a Bosworth Field—and many more.

"Sir Thomas Lawrence was so kind as invite me to see his pictures,—what an admirable portrait he has commenced of you!—he has altogether hit a happy and interesting expression. I do not know whether you have heard that there is an exhibition at Leeds this year. I had an application for the use of Raeburn's picture, which is now there; and it stands No. 1 in the catalogue, of which I inclose you a copy.

"You will receive with this a copy of the 'Poetry, original and selected.' I have, I fear, overshot the mark by including the poetry of the Pirate, a liberty for which I must hope to be forgiven. The publication of the volume will be delayed ten days, in case you should do me the favour to suggest any alteration in the advertisement, or other change.—I have the honour to be, dear Sir Walter, your faithful humble servant, ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE."

The last paragraph of this letter alludes to a little volume, into which Constable had collected the songs, mottoes, and other scraps of verse scattered over Scott's Novels, from Waverley to the Pirate. It had a considerable run; and had it appeared sooner, might have saved Mr Adolphus the trouble of writing an essay to prove that the Author of Waverley, whoever he might be, was a Poet.

Constable, during his residence in England at this time, was in the habit of writing every week or two to Sir

* Had Mr Constable quite forgotten the Lord of the Isles?

Walter, and his letters now before me are all of the same complexion as the preceding specimen. The ardent bookseller's brain seems to have been well-nigh unsettled at this period; and I have often thought that the foxglove which he then swallowed (his complaint being a threatening of water in the chest) might have had a share in the extravagant excitement of his mind. Occasionally, however, he enters on details as to which, or at least as to Sir Walter's share in them, there could not have been any mistake; and these were, it must be owned, of a nature well calculated to nourish and sustain in the author's fancy a degree of almost mad exhilaration, near akin to his publisher's own predominant mood. In a letter of the ensuing month, for example, after returning to the progress of Peveril of the Peak, under 10,000 copies of which (or nearly that number) Ballantyne's presses were now groaning, and glancing gaily to the prospect of their being kept regularly employed to the same extent until three other novels, as yet unchristened, had followed Peveril, he adds a summary of what was then, had just been, or was about to be, the amount of occupation furnished to the same office by reprints of older works of the same pen;—"a summary," he exclaims, "to which I venture to say there will be no rival in our day!" And well might Constable say so; for the result is, that James Ballantyne and Co. had just executed, or were on the eve of executing, by his order—

"A new edition of Sir W. Scott's Poetical Works, in 10 vols. (miniature), . . 5000 copies.
"Novels and Tales, 12 vols. ditto, . . 5000 —
"Historical Romances, 6 vols. ditto, . 5000 —
"Poetry from Waverley, &c. 1 vol. 12mo, 5000 —
"Paper required, . . . . . 7772 reams.
"Volumes produced from Ballantyne's press, 145,000!"

To which we may safely add from 30,000 to 40,000 volumes more as the immediate produce of the author's daily industry within the space of twelve months. The scale of these operations was, without question, enough to turn any bookseller's wits;—Constable's, in its soberest hours, was as inflammable a head-piece as ever sat on the shoulders of a poet; and his ambition, in truth, had been moving *pari passu*, during several of these last stirring and turmoiling years, with that of *his* poet. He, too, as I ought to have mentioned ere now, had, like a true Scotchman, concentred his dreams on the hope of bequeathing to his heir the name and dignity of a lord of acres. He, too, had considerably before this time purchased a landed estate in his native county of Fife; he, too, I doubt not, had, while Abbotsford was rising, his own rural castle *in petto;* and alas! for "Archibald Constable of Balniel" also, and his overweening intoxication of worldly success, Fortune had already begun to prepare a stern rebuke.

Nigel was, I need not say, considered as ranking in the first class of Scott's romances. Indeed, as a historical portraiture, his of James I. stands forth preeminent, and almost alone; nor, perhaps, in reperusing these novels deliberately as a series, does any one of them leave so complete an impression as the picture of an age. It is, in fact, the best commentary on the old English drama—hardly a single picturesque point of manners touched by Ben Jonson and his contemporaries but has been dovetailed into this story, and all so easily and naturally, as to form the most striking contrast to the historical romances of authors who *cram*, as the schoolboys phrase it, and then set to work oppressed and bewildered with their crude and undigested burden.

The novel was followed in June by the dramatic sketch of Halidon Hill; but that had far inferior success. I

shall say a word on it presently, in connexion with another piece of the same order.

A few weeks before this time Cornet Scott had sailed for Germany, and, it seems, in the midst of rough weather—his immediate destination being Berlin, where his father's valued friend Sir George Rose was then Ambassador from the Court of St James:—

*For Walter Scott, Esq., care of His Excellency Sir George Rose, &c. &c., Berlin.*

"My dear Walter,

"Your letters came both together this morning, and relieved me from a disagreeable state of anxiety about you, for the winds have been tremendous since you sailed; and no news arriving from the Continent, owing to their sticking in the west, I was really very uneasy. Luckily mamma did not take any alarm. I have no news to send you save what are agreeable. We are well here, and going on in the old fashion. Last night Mathews the comedian was with us, and made himself very entertaining. About a week ago the Comptesse Nial, a lady in the service of Princess Louisa of Prussia, came to dine here with the Lord Chief Commissioner and family, and seemed to take a great interest in what she heard and saw of our Scottish fashions. She was so good as to offer me letters for you to the Princess Louisa; General Gneissenau, who was Adjutant-General of Blucher's army, and formed the plan of almost all the veteran's campaigns; and to the Baroness de la Motte Fouquè, who is distinguished in the world of letters, as well as her husband the Baron, the author of many very pleasing works of fiction, particularly the beautiful tale of Undine, and the travels of Theodulph. If you find an opportunity to say to the Baroness how much I have been interested by her writings and Mons. de la Motte Fouquè's, you will say no more than the

truth, and it will be civil, for folks like to know that they are known and respected beyond the limits of their own country.

"Having the advantage of good introductions to foreigners of distinction, I hope you will not follow the established English fashion of herding with your countrymen, and neglecting the opportunity of extending your acquaintance with the language and society. There is, I own, a great temptation to this in a strange country; but it is destruction of all the purposes for which the expense and trouble of foreign travel are incurred. Labour particularly at the German, as the French can be acquired elsewhere; but I should rather say, work hard at both. It is not, I think, likely, though it is possible, that you may fall into company with some of the *Têtes échauffées*, who are now so common in Germany—men that would pull down the whole political system in order to rebuild it on a better model: a proposal about as wild as that of a man who should propose to change the bridle of a furious horse, and commence his labours by slipping the headstall in the midst of a heath. Prudence, as well as principle and my earnest desire, will induce you to avoid this class of politicians, who, I know, are always on the alert to kidnap young men.

"I account Sir George Rose's being at Berlin the most fortunate circumstance which could have befallen you, as you will always have a friend whom you can consult in case of need. Do not omit immediately arranging your time so as to secure as much as possible for your studies and exercises. For the last I recommend fencing and riding in the academy; for though a good horseman, it is right you should keep up the habit, and many of the German schools are excellent. I think, however, Sir George Rose says that of Berlin is but indifferent; and he is a good judge of the art. I pray

you not to lose time in dawdling; for, betwixt Edinburgh, London, and the passage, much of the time which our plan destined for your studies has been consumed, and your return into the active service of your profession is proportionally delayed; so lose no time. I cannot say but what I am very happy that you are not engaged in the inglorious, yet dangerous and harassing, warfare of Ireland at present. Your old friend Paddy is now stark mad, and doing much mischief. Sixteen of the Peelers have, I see by this morning's papers, been besieged in their quarters by the mob, four killed, and the rest obliged to surrender after they had fired the house in which they were quartered. The officers write that the service is more harassing than on the Peninsula, and it would appear a considerable part of the country is literally in possession of the insurgents. You are just as well learning *Teütsche sprechen.* I am glad to see you are writing a firm and good hand. Your last from Hamburgh was distinctly written, and well composed. Pray write all your remarks, and pay some little attention to the style, which, without being stiff or pedantic, should always be accurate.

"The Lockharts are well; but baby has a cough, which keeps Sophia anxious: they cannot say whether it be the hooping-cough or no. Mamma, Anne, and little Walter* send kind love. The little fellow studies hard, and will, I hope, be a credit to the name he bears. If you do not take care, he may be a General before you. Always, my dear Walter, most affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S.—The Germans are a people of form. You will take care to learn the proper etiquette about delivering the enclosed letters."

* Walter, the son of Mr Thomas Scott, was at this time domiciled with his uncle's family.

## CHAPTER VIII.

REPAIRS OF MELROSE ABBEY—LETTERS TO LORD MONTAGU AND MISS EDGEWORTH—KING GEORGE IV. VISITS SCOTLAND —CELTIC MANIA—MR CRABBE IN CASTLE STREET—DEATH OF LORD KINNEDDER—DEPARTURE OF THE KING—LETTERS FROM MR PEEL AND MR CROKER.

1822.

DURING April, May, and June of this year, Scott's thoughts were much occupied with a plan for securing Melrose Abbey against the progress of decay, which had been making itself manifest to an alarming extent, and to which he had often before directed the attention of the Buccleuch family. Even in writing to persons who had never seen Melrose, he could not help touching on this business—for he wrote, as he spoke, out of the fulness of the heart. The young Duke readily concurred with his guardians in allowing the poet to direct such repairs as might seem to him adequate; and the result was extremely satisfactory to all the habitual worshippers of these classical ruins.

I return to the copious and candid correspondence from which it has been throughout my object to extract and combine the scattered fragments of an *autobiography*.

*To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown.*

"Abbotsford, 24th April, 1822.

"My dear Miss Edgeworth,

"I am extremely sorry indeed that you cannot fulfil your kind intentions to be at Abbotsford this year.

It is a great disappointment, and I am grieved to think it should have arisen from the loss of a valued relation. That is the worst part of life when its earlier path is trod. If my limbs get stiff, my walks are made shorter, and my rides slower.—If my eyes fail me, I can use glasses and a large print.—If I get a little deaf, I comfort myself that, except in a few instances, I shall be no great loser by missing one full half of what is spoken; but I feel the loneliness of age when my companions and friends are taken from me. The sudden death of both the Boswells, and the bloody end of the last, have given me great pain.* You have never got half the praise *Vivian* ought to have procured you. The reason is, that the class from which the excellent portrait was drawn, feel the resemblance too painfully to thank the author for it; and I do not believe the common readers understand it in the least. I who, thank God, am neither great man nor politician, have lived enough among them to recognise the truth and nature of the painting, and am no way implicated in the satire. I begin to think that of the three kingdoms the English alone are

* James Boswell of the Temple, editor of the last Variorum Shakspeare, &c., a man of considerable learning and admirable social qualities, died suddenly, in the prime of life, about a fortnight before his brother Sir Alexander. Scott was warmly attached to them both, and the fall of the Baronet might well give him a severe shock, for he had dined in Castle Street only two or three days before it occurred, and the merriest tones of his voice were still ringing in his friend's ears when he received the fatal intelligence. That evening was, I think, the gayest I ever spent in Castle Street; and though Charles Mathews was present, and in his best force, poor Boswell's songs, jokes, and anecdotes, had exhibited no symptom of eclipse. It turned out that he had joined the party whom he thus delighted, immediately after completing the last arrangements for his duel. It may be worth while to add, that several circumstances of his death are *exactly* reproduced in the duel scene of St Ronan's Well.

qualified to mix in politics safely and without fatal results; the fierce and hasty resentments of the Irish, and the sullen, long-enduring, revengeful temper of my countrymen, make such agitations have a much wider and more dreadful effect amongst them. Well, we will forget what we cannot help, and pray that we may lose no more friends till we find, as I hope and am sure we shall do, friends in each other. I had arranged to stay at least a month after the 12th of May, in hopes of detaining you at Abbotsford, and I will not let you off under a month or two the next year. I shall have my house completed, my library replaced, my armoury new furbished, my piper new clothed, and the time shall be July. I trust I may have the same family about me, and perhaps my two sons. Walter is at Berlin studying the great art of war—and entertaining a most military conviction that all the disturbances of Ireland are exclusively owing to his last regiment, the 18th hussars, having been imprudently reduced. Little Charles is striving to become a good scholar and fit for Oxford. Both have a chance of being at home in autumn 1823. I know nothing I should wish you to see which has any particular chance of becoming invisible in the course of fourteen months, excepting my old bloodhound, poor fellow, on whom age now sits so heavily, that he cannot follow me far from the house. I wished you to see him very much—he is of that noble breed which Ireland, as well as Scotland, once possessed, and which is now almost extinct in both countries. I have sometimes thought of the final cause of dogs having such short lives, and I am quite satisfied it is in compassion to the human race; for if we suffer so much in losing a dog after an acquaintance of ten or twelve years, what would it be if they were to live double that time?

"I don't propose being in London this year—I do

not like it—there is such a riding and driving—so much to see—so much to say—not to mention plover's eggs and champagne—that I always feel too much excited in London, though it is good to rub off the rust too, sometimes, and brings you up abreast with the world as it goes——But I must break off, being summoned to a conclave to examine how the progress of decay, which at present threatens to destroy the ruins of Melrose, can yet be arrested. The Duke of Buccleuch, though but a boy, is very desirous to have something done, and his guardians have acquiesced in a wish so reasonable and creditable to the little chief. I only hope they will be liberal, for a trifle will do no good, or rather, I think, any partial tampering is likely to do harm. But the Duke has an immense estate, and I hope they will remember, that though a moderate sum may keep up this national monument, yet his whole income could not replace it should it fall.—Yours, dear Miss Edgeworth, with true respect and regard,

WALTER SCOTT."

*To the Lord Montagu, &c.*

"Abbotsford, 29th April, 1822.

"My dear Lord,

"The state of the east window is peculiarly precarious, and it may soon give way if not assisted. There would not only be dishonour in that, as Trinculo says when he lost his bottle in the pool, but an infinite loss. Messrs Smallwood and Smith concur, there will be no difficulty in erecting a scaffolding strong enough to support the weight of an interior arch or *beam*, as we call it, of wood, so as to admit the exterior two rows of the stone-arch to be lifted and replaced, stone by stone, and made as sure as ever they were. The other ribs

should then be pointed both above and beneath, every fissure closed, every tree and shrub eradicated, and the whole arch covered with Roman cement, or, what would be greatly better, with lead. This operation relates to the vault over the window. Smallwood thinks that the window itself, that is, the shafted columns, should be secured by renewing the cross-irons which formerly combined them together laterally, and the holes of which still remain; and, indeed, considering how it has kept its ground in its present defenceless state, I think it amounts to a certainty that the restoration of so many *points d'appui* will secure it against any tempest whatsoever, especially when the vaulted roof is preserved from the present risk of falling down on it.

"There is one way in which the expense would be greatly lessened, and the appearance of the building in the highest degree improved, but it depends on a *proviso*. Provided then that the whole eastern window, with the vault above it, were repaired and made, as Law says, *sartum atque tectum*, there could be no objection to taking down the modern roof with the clumsy buttresses on the northern side.* Indeed I do not see how the roof's continuing could in any respect protect the window, though it may be very doubtful whether the west gable should be pulled down, which would expose the east window to a thorough draft of air, a circumstance which the original builder did not contemplate, and against which, therefore, he made no provision. The taking down this roof and the beastly buttresses would expose a noble range of columns on each side.—Ever, my dear Lord, yours ever truly, W. S."

* Sometime after the disciples of John Knox had done their savage pleasure upon Melrose Abbey, the western part of the chancel was repaired in a most clumsy style to serve as a parish kirk.

*To the Same.*

" Abbotsford, 15th May, 1822.

" My dear Lord,

" I am quite delighted with the commencement of the Melrose repairs, and hope to report progress before I leave the country, though that must be on Monday next. Please God, I will be on the roof of the old Abbey myself when the scaffolding is up. When I was a boy I could climb like a wild-cat; and entire affection to the work on hand must on this occasion counterbalance the disadvantages of increased weight and stiffened limbs. The east and south windows certainly claim the preference in any repairs suggested; the side aisles are also in a very bad way, but cannot in this summer weather be the worse of delay. It is the rain that finds its way betwixt the arch-stones in winter, and is there arrested by the frost, which ruins ancient buildings when exposed to wet. Ice occupies more space than water unfrozen, and thus, when formed, operates as so many wedges inserted between the stones of the arch, which, of course, are dislocated by this interposition, and in process of time the equilibrium of the arch is destroyed—Q. E. D. There spoke the President of the R. S. E. The removal of the old roof would not be attended with a penny of expense, nay, might be a saving were it thought proper to replace the flags which now cover it upon the side aisles, where they certainly originally lay. The ruble stones would do much more than pay the labourers. But though this be the case, and though the beauty of the ruin would be greatly increased, still I should first like to be well assured that the east window was not thereby deprived of shelter. It is to be seriously weighed that the architect who has shown so much skill, would not fail to modify the strength of the different

parts of his building to the violence which they were to sustain; and as it never entered into his pious pate, that the east window was to be exposed to a thorough blast from west to east, it is possible he may not have constructed it of strength sufficient to withstand its fury, and therefore I say caution, caution.

"We are not like to suffer on this occasion the mortification incurred by my old friend and kinsman Mr Keith of Ravelstone, a most excellent man, but the most irresolute in the world, more especially when the question was unloosing his purse strings. Conceiving himself to represent the great Earls-Marischal, and being certainly possessed of their castle and domains, he bethought him of the family vault, a curious Gothic building in the churchyard of Dunnotar: L.10 it was reported would do the job—my good friend proffered L.5—it would not do. Two years after he offered the full sum. A report was sent that the breaches were now so much increased that L.20 would scarce serve. Mr Keith humm'd and ha'd for three years more; then offered L.20. The wind and rain had not waited his decision—less than L.50 would not now serve. A year afterwards he sent a cheque for the L.50, which was returned by post, with the pleasing intelligence that the Earl-Marischal's aisle had fallen the preceding week. Your Lordship's prompt decision has probably saved Melrose Abbey from the same fate. I protest I often thought I was looking on it for the last time.

"I do not know how I could write in such a slovenly way as to lead your Lordship to think that I could recommend planting even the fertile soil of Bowden-moor in the month of April or May. Except evergreens, I would never transplant a tree betwixt March and Martinmas. Indeed I hold by the old proverb—plant a tree before Candlemas, and *command* it to grow—plant

it after Candlemas, and you must *entreat* it. I only spoke of this as a thing which you might look at when your Lordship came here; and so your ideas exactly meet mine.

"I think I can read Lady Montagu's dream, or your Lordship's, or my own, or our common vision, without a Daniel coming to judgment, for I bethink me my promise related to some Botany Bay seeds, &c., sent me in gratitude by an honest gentleman who had once run some risk of being himself pendulous on a tree in this country. If they come to any thing pretty, we shall be too proud to have some of the produce at Ditton.

"Your hailstones have visited us—mingled, in Scripture phrase, with coals of fire. My uncle, now ninety-three years complete, lives in the house of Monklaw, where the offices were set on fire by the lightning. The old gentleman was on foot, and as active with his orders and directions as if he had been but forty-five. They wished to get him off, but he answered, 'Na, na, lads, I have faced mony a fire in my time, and I winna turn my back on this ane.' Was not this a good cut of an old Borderer?—Ever your Lordship's faithful

W. SCOTT."

In the next of these letters Sir Walter refers to the sudden death of the excellent Primate of Ireland, the Honourable William Stuart, brother to his and Lord Montagu's dear friend Lady Louisa. His Grace appears to have been cut off in consequence of an over-dose of laudanum being accidentally administered to him.

*To the Same.*

"Edinburgh, 24th May, 1822.

"I do devoutly grieve for poor Lady Louisa. With

a mind and indeed a bodily frame which suffers so peculiarly as hers under domestic affliction, I think she has had a larger share of it than any person almost in my acquaintance. Perhaps, in her case, celibacy, by extending the affections of so kind a heart through the remoter range of relationship, has rendered her more liable to such inroads upon her happiness. I remember several accidents similar to that of the Archbishop of Armagh. Henderson's (the player) was one. His wife, who administered the fatal draught, was the only person who remained ignorant of the cause of his death. One of the Duke's farmers, some years since, showed extraordinary resolution in the same situation. His father had given him a quantity of laudanum instead of some other medicine. The mistake was instantly discovered; but the young man had sufficient energy and force of mind to combat the operation of the drug. While all around him were stupid with fear, he rose, saddled his horse, and rode to Selkirk (six or seven miles); thus saving the time that the doctor must have taken in coming to him. It is very curious that his agony of mind was able to suspend the operation of the drug until he had alighted, when it instantly began to operate. He recovered perfectly.

"Much obliged by the communication of the symbols adopted by the lady patronesses at the ball for the Scottish Corporation. Some seem very apocryphal. I have somewhere two lists of the badges of the Highland clans, which do not quite correspond with each other. I suppose they sometimes shifted their symbols. In general was a rule to have an evergreen; and I have heard that the downfall of the Stuarts was supposed to be omened by their having chosen the oak for their badge of distinction. I have always heard that of the Scotts was the heath-flower, and that they were some-

times called *Heather-tops* from that circumstance. There is a rhyme in Satchells or elsewhere, which runs thus:—

> "If heather-bells were corn of the best,
> Buccleuch-mill would have a noble grist."

In the Highlands I used sometimes to put heath in my hat, and was always welcomed as a kinsman by the Macdonalds, whose badge is *freugh*, or heather. By the way, Glengarry has had an affair with a cow, in which, rumour says, he has not come off quite so triumphantly as Guy of Warwick in an incident of the same nature. Lord pity them that should mention Tom Thumb.—Yours ever, W. S."

In the following he touches, among other things, on a strange book, called, "Cranbourne Chase," the performance of a clergyman mad upon sport, which had been sent to him by his friend William Rose;—the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, as celebrated by him and his rural allies at Melrose;—a fire which had devastated the New Forest, in the neighbourhood of Lord Montagu's seat of Beaulieu Abbey;—and the annual visit to Blair-Adam, which suggested the subject of another dramatic sketch, that of "Macduff's Cross."

*To the Same.*

"Edinburgh, June 23, 1822.

"I am glad your Lordship likes Cranbourne Chase: if you had not, I should have been mortified in my self-conceit, for I thought you were exactly the person to relish it. If you bind it, pray insert at the beginning or end two or three leaves of blank paper, that I may insert some excellent anecdotes of the learned author, which I got from good authority. His *debût* in the sporting line was shooting an old cat, for which

crime his father made him do penance upon bread and water for three months in a garret, where he amused himself with hunting rats upon a new principle. Is not this being game to the back-bone?

"I expect to be at Abbotsford for two days about the 18th, that I may hold a little jollification with the inhabitants of Melrose and neighbourhood, who always have a gaudeamus, like honest men, on the anniversary of Waterloo. I shall then see what is doing at the Abbey. I am very tenaciously disposed to think, that when the expense of scaffolding, &c. is incurred, it would be very desirable to complete the thing by covering the arch with lead, which will secure it for 500 years. I doubt compositions standing our evil climate; and then the old story of vegetation taking place among the stones comes round again, and twenty years put it in as much danger as before. To be sure the lead will not look so picturesque as cement, but then the preservation will be complete and effectual.

"The fire in Bewly forest reminds me of a pine wood in Strathspey taking fire, which threatened the most destructive consequences to the extensive forests of the Laird of Grant. He sent the *fiery cross* (there peculiarly appropriate, and the last time, it is said, that it was used) through Glen-Urquhart and all its dependencies, and assembled 500 Highlanders with axes, who could only stop the conflagration by cutting a gap of 500 yards in width betwixt the burning wood and the rest of the forest. This occurred about 1770, and must have been a most tremendous scene.

"Adam Ferguson and I spent Saturday, Sunday, and Monday last in scouring the country with the Chief Baron and Chief Commissioner in search of old castles, crosses, and so forth; and the pleasant weather rendered the excursion delightful. The beasts of Reformers have

left only the bottom-stone or socket of Macduff's Cross, on which is supposed to have been recorded the bounty of King Malcom Canmore to the unborn Thane of Fife. It was a comfort, however, to have seen any thing of it at all. As to your being in Bond Street, I can only say I pity you with all my heart. Castle Street is bad enough, even with the privilege of a hop-step-and-jump to Abbotsford, by way of shoemakers' holiday.

"I shall be delighted to hear that Lady Charlotte's bridal has taken place;* and as doubtless she destines a pair of gloves to one of her oldest friends and well-wishers, I hope her Ladyship will not allow the awful prospect before her to put out of her recollection that I have the largest pair of hands almost in Scotland (now that Hugh Warrender is gone), and that if there be seven-leagued gloves, as once there were seven-leagued boots, they will be most 'germain to the matter.' My respectful compliments to the bride-elect and her sisters, to Lady Montagu, and your own young ladies. I have scarce room to add that I always am your Lordship's very faithful WALTER SCOTT."

On the 12th of July, Sir Walter, as usual, left Edinburgh, but he was recalled within a week, by the business to which the following note refers—

*To D. Terry, Esq., London.*

"Edinburgh, 31st July, 1822.

"My dear Terry,

"I have not a moment to think my own thoughts, or mind my own matters: would you were here, for we are in a famous perplexity: the motto on the St Andrew's

* Lady Charlotte Scott, sister to the present Duke of Buccleuch, was married about this time to her cousin Lord Stopford, now Earl of Courtown.

Cross, to be presented to the King, is '*Righ Albainn gu brath*,' that is, 'Long Life to the King of Scotland.' '*Righ gu brath*' would make a good motto for a button—'the King for ever.' I wish to have Montrose's sword down with the speed of light, as I have promised to let my cousin, the Knight-Marshal, have it on this occasion. Pray send it down by the mail-coach: I can add no more, for the whole of this work has devolved on my shoulders. If Montrose's sword is not quite finished send it nevertheless.*—Yours entirely,

W. SCOTT."

We have him here in the hot bustle of preparation for King George the Fourth's reception in Scotland, where his Majesty spent a fortnight in the ensuing August, as he had a similar period in Ireland the year before, immediately after his coronation. Before this time no Prince of the House of Hanover was known to have touched the soil of Scotland, except one, whose name had ever been held there in universal detestation—the cruel conqueror of Culloden,—'the butcher Cumberland.' Now that the very last dream of Jacobitism had expired with the Cardinal of York, there could be little doubt that all the northern Tories, of whatever shade of sentiment, would concur to give their lawful Sovereign a greeting of warm and devoted respect; but the feelings of the Liberals towards George IV. personally had been unfavourably tinctured, in consequence of several incidents in his history—above all—(speaking of the mass of population addicted to that political creed)—the unhappy dissensions and scandals which had termi-

* There is in the armoury at Abbotsford a sword presented by Charles I. to the great Marquis of Montrose—with Prince Henry's arms and cypher on one side of the blade, and his own on the other. Sir Walter had sent it to Terry for a new sheath, &c.

nated, as it were but yesterday, in the trial of his Queen. The recent asperities of the political press on both sides, and some even fatal results to which these had led, must also be taken into account. On the whole it was, in the opinion of cool observers, a very doubtful experiment, which the new, but not young King, had resolved on trying. That he had been moved to do so in a very great measure, both directly and indirectly, by Scott, there can be no question; and I believe it will now be granted by all who can recall the particulars as they occurred, that his Majesty mainly owed to Scott's personal influence, authority, and zeal, the more than full realization of the highest hopes he could have indulged on the occasion of this northern progress.

Whether all the arrangements which Sir Walter dictated or enforced, were conceived in the most accurate taste, is a different question. It appeared to be very generally thought, when the first programmes were issued, that the Highlanders, their kilts, and their bagpipes, were to occupy a great deal too much space in every scene of public ceremony connected with the King's reception. With all respect and admiration for the noble and generous qualities which our countrymen of the Highland clans have so often exhibited, it was difficult to forget that they had always constituted a small, and almost always an unimportant part of the Scottish population; and when one reflected how miserably their numbers had of late years been reduced in consequence of the selfish and hard-hearted policy of their landlords, it almost seemed as if there was a cruel mockery in giving so much prominence to their pretensions. But there could be no question that they were picturesque—and their enthusiasm was too sincere not to be catching; so that by and by even the coolest-headed Sassenach felt his heart, like John of Argyle's, "warm to the tartan;" and high and low

were in the humour, not only to applaud, but each, according to his station, to take a share in what might really be described as a sort of grand *terryfication* of the Holyrood chapters in Waverley; George IV., *anno ætatis* 60, being well contented to enact "Prince Charlie," with the Great Unknown himself for his Baron Bradwardine, "*ad exuendas vel detrahendas caligas domini regis post battalliam.*"

But Sir Walter had as many parts to play as ever tasked the Protean genius of his friend Mathews; and he played them all with as much cordial energy as animated the exertions of any Henchman or Piper in the company. His severest duties, however, were those of stage-manager, and under these I sincerely believe any other human being's temper and patience would very soon have given way. The local magistrates, bewildered and perplexed with the rush of novelty, threw themselves on him for advice and direction about the merest trifles; and he had to arrange every thing, from the ordering of a procession to the cut of a button and the embroidering of a cross. Ere the greenroom in Castle Street had dismissed provosts, and bailies, and deacon-conveners of the trades of Edinburgh, it was sure to be besieged by swelling chieftains, who could not agree on the relative positions their clans had occupied at Bannockburn, which they considered as constituting the authentic precedent for determining their own places, each at the head of his little theatrical *tail*, in the line of the King's escort between the Pier of Leith and the Canongate. It required all Scott's unwearied good-humour, and imperturbable power of face, to hear in becoming gravity the sputtering controversies of such fiery rivals, each regarding himself as a true potentate, the representative of Princes as ancient as Bourbon; and no man could have coaxed them into

decent co-operation, except him whom all the Highlanders, from the haughtiest MacIvor to the slyest Callum-Beg, agreed in looking up to as the great restorer and blazoner of their traditionary glories. He had, however, in all this most delicate part of his administration an admirable assistant in one who had also, by the direction of his literary talents, acquired no mean share of authority among the Celts — namely, the late General David Stewart of Garth, author of the "History of the Highland Regiments." On Garth (seamed all over with the scars of Egypt and Spain) devolved the Toy-Captainship of the *Celtic Club*, already alluded to as an association of young civilians enthusiastic for the promotion of the philabeg—and he drilled and conducted that motley array in such style, that they formed, perhaps, the most splendid feature in the whole of this plaided panorama. But he, too, had a potential voice in the conclave of rival chieftains,—and, with the able backing of this honoured veteran, Scott succeeded finally in assuaging all their heats, and reducing their conflicting pretensions to terms of truce, at least, and compromise. A ballad (now included in his works), wherein these magnates were most adroitly flattered, was widely circulated among them and their followers, and was understood to have had a considerable share of the merit in this peacemaking; but the constant hospitality of his table was a not less efficient organ of influence. A friend coming in upon him as a detachment of Duniewassails were enjoying, for the first time, his "Cogie now the King's Come," in his breakfast parlour, could not help whispering in his ear—"You are just your own Lindesay in Marmion—*still thy verse hath charms*;"—and, indeed, almost the whole of the description thus referred to might have been applied to him when arranging the etiquettes of

this ceremonial; for, among other persons in place and dignity who leaned to him for support on every question, was his friend and kinsman, the late worthy Sir Alexander Keith, Knight-Marischal of Scotland; and—

" Heralds and pursuivants by name
Bute, Islay, Marchmont, Rothesay came,
Attendant on a king-at-arms,
Whose hand the armorial truncheon held,
That feudal strife had often quelled,
When wildest its alarms.
He was a man of middle age,
In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
As on King's errand come;
But in the glances of his eye,
A penetrating, keen, and sly
Expression found its home . . . . . .
*Still is thy name in high account,*
*And still thy verse hath charms;*
Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
Lord Lyon King-at-arms."

About noon of the 14th of August, the royal yacht and the attendant vessels of war cast anchor in the Roads of Leith; but although Scott's ballad-prologue had entreated the clergy to " warstle for a sunny day," the weather was so unpropitious that it was found necessary to defer the landing until the 15th. In the midst of the rain, however, Sir Walter rowed off to the Royal George; and, says the newspaper of the day,—

" When his arrival alongside the yacht was announced to the King,—' What!' exclaimed his Majesty, ' Sir Walter Scott! The man in Scotland I most wish to see! Let him come up.' This distinguished Baronet then ascended the ship, and was presented to the King on the quarter-deck, where, after an appropriate speech in name of the ladies of Edinburgh, he presented his Majesty with a St Andrew's Cross, in silver, which his fair subjects had provided for him.* The King, with evident marks of satisfaction, made a

* This was the cross inscribed " Righ Albainn gu brath," about which Scott wrote to Terry on the 31st July.

gracious reply to Sir Walter, received the gift in the most kind and condescending manner, and promised to wear it in public, in token of acknowledgment to the fair donors."

To this record let me add, that, on receiving the poet on the quarter-deck, his Majesty called for a bottle of Highland whisky, and having drunk his health in this national liquor, desired a glass to be filled for him. Sir Walter, after draining his own bumper, made a request that the King would condescend to bestow on him the glass out of which his Majesty had just drunk his health; and this being granted, the precious vessel was immediately wrapped up and carefully deposited in what he conceived to be the safest part of his dress. So he returned with it to Castle Street; but—to say nothing at this moment of graver distractions—on reaching his house he found a guest established there of a sort rather different from the usual visiters of the time. The poet Crabbe, to whom he had been introduced when last in London by Mr Murray of Albemarle Street, after repeatedly promising to follow up the acquaintance by an excursion to the north, had at last arrived in the midst of these tumultuous preparations for the royal advent. Notwithstanding all such impediments, he found his quarters ready for him, and Scott entering, wet and hurried, embraced the venerable man with brotherly affection. The royal gift was forgotten—the ample skirt of the coat within which it had been packed, and which he had hitherto held cautiously in front of his person, slipped back to its more usual position—he sat down beside Crabbe, and the glass was crushed to atoms. His scream and gesture made his wife conclude that he had sat down on a pair of scissors, or the like; but very little harm had been done except the breaking of the glass, of which alone he had been thinking. This was a damage not to be repaired: as for the scratch that

accompanied it, its scar was of no great consequence, as even when mounting the "*cat-dath*, or battle-garment" of the Celtic Club, he adhered, like his hero Waverley, to *the trews*.

By six o'clock next morning, Sir Walter, arrayed in the "Garb of old Gaul" (which he had of the Campbell tartan, in memory of one of his great grandmothers), was attending a muster of these gallant Celts in the Queen Street Gardens, where he had the honour of presenting them with a set of colours, and delivered a suitable exhortation, crowned with their rapturous applause. Some members of the Club, all of course in their full costume, were invited to breakfast with him. He had previously retired for a little to his library, and when he entered the parlour, Mr Crabbe, dressed in the highest style of professional neatness and decorum, with buckles in his shoes, and whatever was then considered as befitting an English clergyman of his years and station, was standing in the midst of half-a-dozen stalwart Highlanders, exchanging elaborate civilities with them, in what was at least meant to be French. He had come into the room shortly before, without having been warned about such company, and hearing the party conversing together in an unknown tongue, the polite old man had adopted, in his first salutation, what he considered as the universal language. Some of the Celts, on their part, took him for some fóreign abbé or bishop, and were doing their best to explain to him that they were not the wild savages for which, from the startled glance he had thrown on their hirsute proportions, there seemed but too much reason to suspect he had taken them; others, more perspicacious, gave into the thing for the joke's sake; and there was high fun when Scott dissolved the charm of their stammering, by grasping Crabbe with one hand, and the nearest of these figures with the

other, and greeted the whole group with the same hearty *good-morning*.

Perhaps no Englishman of these recent days ever arrived in Scotland with a scantier stock of information about the country and the people than (judging, from all that he said, and more expressively looked) this illustrious poet had brought with him in August 1822. It seemed as if he had never for one moment conceived that the same island, in which his peaceful parsonage stood, contained actually a race of men, and gentlemen too, owning no affinity with Englishmen, either in blood or in speech, and still proud in wearing, whenever opportunity served, a national dress of their own, bearing considerably more resemblance to an American Indian's than to that of an old-fashioned rector from the Vale of Belvoir. His eyes were opened wide—but they were never opened in vain; and he soon began, if not to comprehend the machinery which his host had called into motion on this occasion, to sympathize at least very warmly and amiably with all the enthusiasm that animated the novel spectacle before him.

I regret that, having been on duty with a troop of yeomanry cavalry on the 15th of August, I lost the opportunity of witnessing Mr Crabbe's demeanour when this magnificent scene was first fully revealed upon him. The whole aspect of the city and its vicinity was, in truth, as new to the inhabitants as it could have been even to the Rector of Muston:—every height and precipice occupied by military of the regular army, or by detachments of these more picturesque irregulars from beyond the Grampians—lines of tents, flags, and artillery circling Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crags, and the Calton Hill—and the old black Castle, and its rock, wreathed in the smoke of repeated salvoes, while a huge banner-royal, such as had not waved there since 1745,

floated and flapped over all;—every street, square, garden, or open space below paved with solid masses of silent expectants, except only where glittering lines of helmets marked the avenue guarded for the approaching procession. All captiousness of criticism sunk into nothing before the grandeur of this vision; and it was the same, or nearly so, on every subsequent day when the King chose to take part in the devised ceremonial. I forget where Sir Walter's place was on the 15th; but on one or other of these occasions I remember him seated in an open carriage, in the Highland dress, armed and accoutred as heroically as Garth himself, (who accompanied him), and evidently in a most bardish state of excitement, while honest Peter Mathieson managed as best he might four steeds of a fierier sort than he had usually in his keeping—though perhaps, after all, he might be less puzzled with them than with the cocked-hat and regular London Jehu's flaxen wig which he, for the first and last time, displayed during "the royal fortnight."

The first procession from Leith to Holyrood was marshalled in strict adherence, it must be admitted, to the poetical programme—

> "Lord! how the pibrochs groan and yell!
> Macdonnell's ta'en the field himsel',
> Macleod comes branking o'er the fell—
> Carle, now the King's come!"

But I must transcribe the newspaper record in its details, because no one could well believe, unless he had a specimen of these before him, the extent to which the Waverley and Rob Roy *animus* was allowed to pervade the whole of this affair.

" Three Trumpeters Mid-Lothian Yeomanry Cavalry.
Squadron Mid-Lothian Yeomanry.
*Two Highland Pipers.*
*Captain Campbell, and Tail of Breadalbane.*
Squadron Scots Greys.
*Two Highland Pipers.*
*Colonel Stewart of Garth and Celtic Club.*
*Sir Evan M'Gregor mounted on horseback, and Tail of M'Gregor.*
Herald mounted.
Marischal trumpets mounted.
A Marischal groom on foot.
Three Marischal grooms abreast.

Two Grooms. { Six Marischal Esquires mounted, three abreast. } Two Grooms.

*Henchman.* Groom. { Knight Marischal mounted, with his baton of office. } *Henchman.* Groom.

*Marischal rear-guard of Highlanders.*
Sheriff mounted.
Sheriff officers.
Deputy Lieutenants in green coats, mounted.
*Two Pipers.*
*General Graham Stirling, and Tail.*
Barons of Exchequer.
Lord Clerk Register.
Lords of Justiciary and Session, in carriages.
Marquis of Lothian, Lord Lieutenant, mounted.
Two Heralds, mounted.
*Glengarry mounted, and grooms.*
*Young Glengarry and two supporters— Tail.*
Four Herald Trumpeters.
White Rod, mounted, and equerries.
Lord Lyon Depute, mounted, and grooms.
Earl of Errol, Lord High Constable, mounted.
Two Heralds, mounted.
Squadron Scots Greys.
Royal Carriage and Six, in which were, the Marquis of Graham, Vice-Chamberlain; Lord G. Beresford, Comptroller of the Household; Lord C. Bentinck, Treasurer of the Household; Sir R. H. Vivian, Equerry to the King; and two others of his Majesty's suite.

Ten Royal Footmen, two and two.
Sixteen Yeomen, two and two.
Archers. " THE KING, Archers.
attended by the Duke of Dorset, Master of the Horse, and
the Marquis of Winchester, Groom of the Stole.
Sir Thomas Bradford and Staff.
Squadron Scots Greys,
*Three Clans of Highlanders and banners.*
Two Squadrons of Mid-Lothian Yeomanry.
Grenadiers of 77th regiment.
Two Squadrons Third dragoon Guards.
Band, and Scots Greys."

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It is, I believe, of the dinner of this 15th August in Castle Street, that Crabbe penned the following brief record in his Journal:—" Whilst it is fresh in my memory, I should describe the day which I have just passed, but I do not believe an accurate description to be possible. What avails it to say, for instance, that there met at the sumptuous dinner, in all the costume of the Highlanders, the great chief himself, and officers of his company. This expresses not the singularity of appearance and manners — the peculiarities of men all gentlemen, but remote from our society—leaders of clans—joyous company. Then we had Sir Walter Scott's national songs and ballads, exhibiting all the feelings of clanship. I thought it an honour that Glengarry even took notice of me, for there were those, and gentlemen too, who considered themselves honoured by following in his train. There were also Lord Errol, and the Macleod, and the Fraser, and the Gordon, and the Ferguson; * and I conversed at dinner with Lady

* Sir Walter's friend, the Captain of Huntleyburn, did not, as far as I remember, sport the Highland dress on this occasion, but no doubt his singing of certain Jacobite songs, &c., contributed to

Glengarry, and did almost believe myself a harper, or bard, rather—for harp I cannot strike; and Sir Walter was the life and soul of the whole. It was a splendid festivity, and I felt I know not how much younger."—*Life of* CRABBE, p. 273.

The King took up his residence, during his stay in his northern dominions, at Dalkeith Palace, a noble seat of the Buccleuch family, within six miles of Edinburgh: and here his dinner-party almost daily included Sir Walter Scott, who, however, appeared to have derived more deep-felt gratification from his Majesty's kind and paternal attention to his juvenile host (the Duke of Buccleuch was at that time only in his sixteenth year), than from all the flattering condescension he lavished on himself. From Dalkeith the King repaired to Holyroodhouse two

make Crabbe set him down for the chief of a clan. Sir Adam, however, is a Highlander by descent, though the name, *MacErries*, has been, for two or three generations, translated into *Ferguson*; and even his reverend and philosophical father had, on at least one remarkable occasion, exhibited the warmth of his Celtic blood in perfection. In his essay on the Life of John Home, Scott says:—"Dr Adam Ferguson went as chaplain to the Black Watch, or 42d Highland regiment, when that corps was first sent to the Continent. As the regiment advanced to the battle of Fontenoy, the commanding officer, Sir Robert Monro, was astonished to see the chaplain at the head of the column, with a broadsword drawn in his hand. He desired him to go to the rear with the surgeons, a proposal which Adam Ferguson spurned. Sir Robert at length told him that his commission did not entitle him to be present in the post which he had assumed.—'D—n my commission,' said the warlike chaplain, throwing it towards his colonel. It may easily be supposed that the matter was only remembered as a good jest; but the future historian of Rome shared the honours and dangers of that dreadful day, where, according to the account of the French themselves, 'the Highland furies rushed in upon them with more violence than ever did a sea driven by a tempest.'"—*Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. XIX. p.* 331.

or three times, for the purposes of a levee or drawing-room. One Sunday he attended divine service in the Cathedral of St Giles', when the decorum and silence preserved by the multitudes in the streets, struck him as a most remarkable contrast to the rapturous excitement of his reception on week days; and the scene was not less noticeable in the eyes of Crabbe, who says, in his Journal,—"The silence of Edinburgh on the Sunday is in itself devout." Another very splendid day was that of a procession from Holyrood to the Castle, whereof the whole ceremonial had obviously been arranged under Scott's auspices, for the purpose of calling up, as exactly as might be, the time-hallowed observance of "the Riding of the Parliament." Mr Peel (then Secretary of State for the Home Department) was desirous of witnessing this procession privately, instead of taking a place in it, and he walked up the High Street accordingly, in company with Scott, some time before the royal cavalcade was to get into motion. The Poet was as little desirous of attracting notice as the Secretary, but he was soon recognised—and his companion, recently revisiting Scotland, expressed his lively remembrance of the enthusiastic veneration with which Scott's person was then greeted by all classes of his countrymen. When proposing Sir Walter's memory at a public dinner given to him in Glasgow, in December 1836, Sir Robert Peel said—"I had the honour of accompanying his late Majesty as his Secretary of State, when he paid a visit to Edinburgh. I suppose there are many of you here who were present on that occasion, at that memorable scene, when the days of ancient chivalry were recalled—when every man's friendship seemed to be confirmed—when men met for the first time, who had always looked to each other with distrust, and resolved in the presence of their Sovereign

to forget their hereditary feuds and animosities. In the beautiful language of Dryden,—

> ' Men met each other with erected look—
> The steps were higher that they took;
> Friends to congratulate their friends would haste,
> And long inveterate foes saluted as they pass'd.'

" Sir Walter Scott took an active lead in these ceremonies. On the day on which his Majesty was to pass from Holyroodhouse, he proposed to me to accompany him up the High Street, to see whether the arrangements were completed. I said to him, ' You are trying a dangerous experiment—you will never get through in privacy.' He said, ' They are entirely absorbed in loyalty.' But I was the better prophet; he was recognised from the one extremity of the street to the other, and never did I see such an instance of national devotion expressed."

The King at his first levee diverted many, and delighted Scott, by appearing in the full Highland garb, —the same brilliant *Steuart Tartans*, so called, in which certainly no Steuart, except Prince Charles, had ever before presented himself in the saloons of Holyrood. His Majesty's Celtic toilette had been carefully watched and assisted by the gallant Laird of Garth, who was not a little proud of the result of his dexterous manipulations of the royal plaid, and pronounced the King " a vera pretty man." And he did look a most stately and imposing person in that beautiful dress—but his satisfaction therein was cruelly disturbed, when he discovered, towering and blazing among and above the genuine Glengarries and Macleods and MacGregors, a figure even more portly than his own, equipped, from a sudden impulse of loyal ardour, in an equally complete set of the self-same conspicuous Steuart tartans :—

" He caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt—
While throng'd the chiefs of every Highland clan
To hail their brother, Vich Ian Alderman." *

In truth, this portentous apparition cast an air of ridicule and caricature over the whole of Sir Walter's Celtified pageantry. A sharp little bailie from Aberdeen, who had previously made acquaintance with the worthy Guildhall Baronet, and tasted the turtle-soup of his voluptuous yacht, tortured him, as he sailed down the long gallery of Holyrood, by suggesting that, after all, his costume was not quite perfect. Sir William, who had been rigged out, as the auctioneers' advertisements say, " regardless of expense," exclaimed that he must be mistaken—begged he would explain his criticism—and as he spoke threw a glance of admiration on a *skene dhu* (black knife), which, like a true " warrior and hunter of deer," he wore stuck into one of his garters. " Oo ay—oo ay," quoth the Aberdonian; " the knife's a' right, mon,—but faar's your speen?"—(where's your spoon?) Such was Scott's story, but whether he " gave it a cocked-hat and walking-cane," in the hope of restoring the King's good-humour, so grievously shaken by this heroical *doppel-ganger*, it is not very necessary to enquire.

As in Hamlet, there was to be a play within the play; and, by his Majesty's desire, Mr Murray's company performed, in his presence, the drama of *Rob Roy*. Mr James Ballantyne's newspaper chronicle says:—

" In the pit and galleries the audience were so closely wedged together, that it would have been found difficult to introduce between any two, even the point of a sabre. It was astonishing to observe the patience, and even the good-nature with which the audience bore the extreme pressure. No one, indeed, could hope to better his situation by any effort; but the joy which was felt seemed com-

* Byron's Age of Bronze.

pletely to have absorbed every feeling of uneasiness. The boxes were filled with the rank, wealth, and beauty of Scotland. In this dazzling galaxy were observed the gallant Sir David Baird, Colonel Stewart of Garth, Glengarry, the Lord Provost, and Sir Walter Scott; each of whom, as he entered, was greeted with loud acclamations.

"At ten minutes past eight, the shouts of the multitude announced the approach of the King, which was confirmed by an outrider, who galloped up with the intelligence. The universal feeling of breathless suspense which at this moment pervaded the audience, cannot be described, and will never be forgotten. Our gracious King now stood before his assembled subjects. The momentary pause of death-like stillness which preceded the King's appearance, gave a deep tone of enthusiasm to the shout—the prolonged and heartfelt shout, which for more than a minute rent the house. The waving of handkerchiefs, of the plumed bonnet, and the tartan scarf, added much to the impressive gladness of the scene which, at this instant, met the eye of the Chief of Chiefs. His Majesty, with his wonted affability, repeatedly bowed to the audience, while the kindly smile which beamed from his manly countenance expressed to this favoured portion of his loving subjects the regard with which he viewed them.

"The play was *Rob Roy*, which his Majesty, in the best taste, had been pleased to command, out of compliment, doubtless, to the country. During the whole performance, the King paid the greatest attention to the business of the stage, and laughed very heartily at some of the more odd incidents,—such as the precipitate retreat of Mr Owen beneath the bed-clothes—the contest in which the Bailie displays his prowess with the *het* poker—and the Bailie's loss of an essential part of his wardrobe. His Majesty seemed fully to comprehend and to relish very much the good-natured wit and innocent sarcasms of the Glasgow magistrate. He laughed outright when this most humorous of functionaries said to Frank Osbaldiston, who was toying with Matty,—'Nane o' your Lon'on tricks;' when he mentioned the distinguishing appellatives of Old and Young Nick, which the citizens had bestowed upon his father and himself; when he testified his distrust of Major Galbraith, who 'has mair brandy than brains,' and of the Highlanders, of whom he says, 'they may quarrel amang themselves now and then, and gie ane anither a stab wi' a dirk or a slash wi' a claymore; but, tak my word on't, they're ay sure to join in the lang run against a' wha hae

purses in their pockets and breeks on their hinder-ends;' and when he said to the boy who returned him his hat and wig, 'that's a braw callant! ye'll be a man before your mither yet.'"

On the 24th of August the Magistrates of Edinburgh entertained their Sovereign with a sumptuous banquet in the Parliament-House; and upon that occasion also Sir Walter Scott filled a prominent station, having been invited to preside over one of the tables. But the most striking homage (though apparently an unconscious one) that his genius received during this festive period, was, when his Majesty, after proposing the health of his hosts the Magistrates and Corporation of the northern capital, rose and said there was one toast more, and but one, in which he must request the assembly to join him,—"I shall simply give you," said he, "*The Chieftains and Clans of Scotland*—and prosperity to the Land of Cakes." So completely had this hallucination taken possession, that nobody seems to have been startled at the time by language which thus distinctly conveyed his Majesty's impression that the marking and crowning glory of Scotland consisted in the Highland clans and their chieftains.

Scott's early associations, and the prime labours and honours of his life had been so deeply connected with the Highlands, that it was no wonder he should have taught himself to look on their clans and chiefs with almost as much affection and respect as if he had had more than a scantling of their blood in his veins. But it was necessary to be an eye-witness of this royal visit, in order to comprehend the extent to which he had allowed his imagination to get the mastery over him as to all these matters; and perhaps it was necessary to understand him thoroughly on such points, in his personal relations, feelings, and demeanour, before one could follow his genius to advan-

tage in some of its most favoured and delightful walks of exertion. The strongest impression, however, which the whole affair left on my mind was, that I had never till then formed any just notion of his capacity for practical dealing and rule among men. I do not think he had much in common with the statesmen and diplomatists of his own age and country; but I am mistaken if Scott could not have played in other days either the Cecil or the Gondomar; and I believe no man, after long and intimate knowledge of any other great poet, has ever ventured to say, that he could have conceived the possibility of any such parts being adequately filled on the active stage of the world, by a person in whom the powers of fancy and imagination had such predominant sway, as to make him in fact live three or four lives habitually in place of one. I have known other literary men of energy perhaps as restless as his; but all such have been entitled to the designation of *busy-bodies*—busy almost exclusively about trifles, and above all, supremely and constantly conscious of their own remarkable activity, and rejoicing and glorying in it. Whereas Scott, neither in literary labour nor in continual contact with the affairs of the world, ever did seem aware that he was making any very extraordinary exertion. The machine, thus gigantic in its impetus, moved so easily that the master had no perception of the obstructions it overcame—in fact, no measure for its power. Compared to him all the rest of the *poet* species that I have chanced to observe nearly—with but one glorious exception—have seemed to me to do little more than sleep through their lives—and at best to fill the sum with dreams; and I am persuaded that, taking all ages and countries together, the rare examples of indefatigable energy, in union with serene self-possession of mind and character, such as Scott's, must be sought for in the

roll of great sovereigns, or great captains, rather than in that of literary genius.

In the case of such renowned practical masters, it has been usual to account for their apparent calmness amidst the stirring troubles of the world, by imputing to them callousness of the affections. Perhaps injustice has been done by the supposition; but at all events, hardly could any one extend it to the case of the placid man of the imaginative order;—a great depicter of man and nature, especially, would seem to be, *ex vi termini*, a profound sympathizer with the passions of his brethren, with the weaknesses as well as with the strength of humanity. Such assuredly was Scott. His heart was as "ramm'd with life" (to use a phrase of Ben Jonson's) as his brain; and I never saw him tried in a tenderer point than he was during the full whirl of splendour and gaiety that seemed to make every brain but his dizzy in the Edinburgh of August 1822.

Few things had ever given him so much pleasure as William Erskine's promotion to the Bench. It seemed to have restored his dearest friend to content and cheerfulness, and thus to have doubled his own sources of enjoyment. But Erskine's constitution had been shaken before he attained this dignity; and the anxious delicacy of his conscience rendered its duties oppressive and overwhelming. In a feeble state of body, and with a sensitive mind stretched and strained, a silly calumny, set a-foot by some envious gossip, was sufficient literally to chase him out of life. On his return to Edinburgh about the 20th of July, Scott found him in visible danger; he did whatever friendship could do to comfort and stimulate him; but all was in vain. Lord Kinnedder survived his elevation hardly half a year—and who that observed Scott's public doings during the three or four weeks I have been describing, could have suspected that he was

daily and nightly the watcher of a deathbed, or the consoler of orphans; striving all the while against

> " True earnest sorrows, rooted miseries,
> Anguish in grain, vexations ripe and blown?"

I am not aware that I ever saw him in such a state of dejection as he was when I accompanied him and his friend Mr Thomas Thomson from Edinburgh to Queensferry, in attendance upon Lord Kinnedder's funeral. Yet that was one of the noisiest days of the royal festival, and he had to plunge into some scene of high gaiety the moment after he returned. As we halted in Castle Street, Mr Crabbe's mild, thoughtful face appeared at the window, and Scott said, on leaving me,—" Now for what our old friend there puts down as the crowning curse of his poor player in the Borough—

> ' To hide in rant the heart-ache of the night.' "

The very few letters that Sir Walter addressed to friends at a distance during the King's stay in Scotland, are chiefly occupied with the calumny which proved fatal to Erskine,—the pains which his friends took, at his request, to sift it to the bottom,—their conviction that he had been charged with an improper *liaison*, without even a shadow of justice,—and their ineffectual efforts to soothe his morbid sensibility. In one of these letters Scott says,—" The legend would have done honour to the invention of the devil himself, especially the object (at least the effect) being to torture to death one of the most soft-hearted and sensitive of God's creatures. I think it was in his nature to like female society in general better than that of men; he had also what might have given some slight shadow to these foul suspicions, an air of being particular in his attentions to women, a sort of Philandering which I used to laugh at him about. The

result of a close investigation having been completely satisfactory, one would have thought the business at an end—but the shaft had hit the mark. At first, while these matters were going on, I got him to hold up his head pretty well; he dined with me, went to the play with my wife—got court dresses for his daughters, whom Lady Scott was to present, and behaved, in my presence at least, like a man, feeling indeed painfully, but bearing up as an innocent man ought to do. Unhappily I could only see him by snatches—the whole business of the reception was suddenly thrown on my hands, and with such a general abandonment, I may say, on all sides, that to work from morning till night was too little time to make the necessary arrangements. In the mean-time, poor Erskine's nerves became weaker and weaker; he was by nature extremely sensitive, easily moved to smiles or tears, and deeply affected by all those circumstances in society to which men of the world become hardened; as, for example, formal introductions to people of rank, and so forth; he was unhappily haunted by the idea that his character, assailed as it had been, was degraded in the eyes of the public, and no argument could remove this delusion. At length fever and delirium came on; he was bled repeatedly and very copiously, a necessary treatment perhaps, but which completely exhausted his weak frame. On the morning of Tuesday, the day of the King's arrival, he waked from his sleep, ordered his window to be opened that he might see the sun once more, and was a dead man immediately after. And so died a man whose head and heart were alike honourable to his kind, and died merely because he could not endure the slightest stain on his reputation.—The present is a scene of great bustle and interest, but though I *must* act my part, I am not, thank God, obliged at this moment to write about it."

In another letter, of nearly the same date, Scott says—"It would be rather difficult for any one who has never lived much among my good country-people, to comprehend that an idle story of a love-intrigue, a story alike base and baseless, should be the death of an innocent man of high character, high station, and well advanced in years. It struck into poor Erskine's heart and soul, however, quite as cruelly as any similar calumny ever affected a modest woman—he withered and sunk. There is no need that I should say peace be with him! If ever a pure spirit quitted this vale of tears it was William Erskine's. I must turn to and see what can be done about getting some pension for his daughters."

The following letter to his son Walter, now a lieutenant in the 15th Hussars, but not yet returned from his German travels, was written a few days later:—

"My dearest Walter,

"This town has been a scene of such giddy tumult since the King's coming, and for a fortnight before, that I have scarce had an instant to myself. For a long time every thing was thrown on my hand, and even now, looking back, and thinking how many difficulties I had to reconcile, objections to answer, prejudices to smoothe away, and purses to open, I am astonished that I did not fever in the midst of it. All, however, has gone off most happily; and the Edinburgh populace have behaved themselves like so many princes. In the day when he went in state from the Abbey to the Castle with the Regalia borne before him, the street was lined with the various trades and professions, all arranged under their own deacons and office-bearers, with white wands in their hands, and with their banners,

and so forth; as they were all in their Sunday's clothes, you positively saw nothing like mob, and their behaviour, which was most steady and respectful towards the King, without either jostling or crowding, had a most singular effect. They shouted with great emphasis, but without any running or roaring, each standing as still in his place as if the honour of Scotland had depended on the propriety of his behaviour. This made the scene quite new to all who had witnessed the Irish reception. The Celtic Society, "all plaided and plumed their tartan arra'," mounted guard over the regalia while in the Abbey with great military order and steadiness. They were exceedingly nobly dressed and armed. There were two or three hundred Highlanders besides, brought down by their own Chiefs, and armed *cap-à-pie*. They were all put under my immediate command by their various chiefs, as they would not have liked to have received orders from each other—so I acted as Adjutant-General, and had scores of them parading in Castle Street every day, with *piob agus brattach*, namely, pipe and banner. The whole went off excellently well. Nobody was so gallant as the Knight-Marischal, who came out with a full retinue of Esquires and Yeomen,—Walter and Charles were his pages. The Archers acted as gentlemen-pensioners, and kept guard in the interior of the palace. Mamma, Sophia, and Anne were presented, and went through the scene with suitable resignation and decorum. In short, I leave the girls to tell you all about balls, plays, sermons, and other varieties of this gay period. To-morrow or next day the King sets off; and I also take my departure, being willing to see Canning before he goes off for India, if, indeed, they are insane enough to part with a man of his power in the House of Commons at this eventful crisis.

"You have heard of poor Lord Londonderry (Castlereagh's) death by his own hand, in a fit of insanity. This explains a story he once told me of having seen a ghost, and which I thought was a very extraordinary narrative from the lips of a man of so much sense and steadiness of nerve. But no doubt he had been subject to aberrations of mind, which often create such phantoms.

"I have had a most severe personal loss in my excellent friend Lord Kinnedder, whose promotion lately rejoiced us so much. I leave you to judge what pain this must have given me, happening as it did in the midst of a confusion from which it was impossible for me to withdraw myself. . . . . .

"All our usual occupations have been broken in upon by this most royal row. Whether Abbotsford is in progress or not I scarcely know; in short, I cannot say that I have thought my own thoughts, or wrought my own work for at least a month past. The same hurry must make me conclude abruptly.—Ever yours, most affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

The ghost story to which the foregoing letter alludes, was this:— Lord Castlereagh, when commanding, in early life, a militia regiment in Ireland, was stationed one night in a large desolate country-house, and his bed was at one end of a long dilapidated room, while at the other extremity a great fire of wood and turf had been prepared within a huge gaping old-fashioned chimney. Waking in the middle of the night, he lay watching from his pillow the gradual darkening of the embers on the hearth, when suddenly they blazed up, and a naked child stepped from among them upon the floor. The figure advanced slowly towards Lord Cas-

tlereagh, rising in stature at every step, until on coming within two or three paces of his bed, it had assumed the appearance of a ghastly giant, pale as death, with a bleeding wound on the brow, and eyes glaring with rage and despair. Lord Castlereagh leaped from his bed, and confronted the figure in an attitude of defiance. It retreated before him, diminishing as it withdrew, in the same manner that it had previously shot up and expanded; he followed it pace by pace, until the original childlike form disappeared among the embers. He then went back to his bed, and was disturbed no more. This story Lord Castlereagh told with perfect gravity at one of his wife's supper parties in Paris in 1815, when Scott was among the hearers. I had often heard him repeat it—before the fatal catastrophe of August 1822 afforded the solution in the text—when he merely mentioned it as a singularly vivid dream, the product probably of a feverish night following upon a military debauch,—but affording a striking indication of the courageous temper, which proved true to itself even amidst the terrors of fancy.

Circumstances did not permit Sir Walter to fulfil his intention of being present at the public dinner given in Liverpool, on the 30th August, to Mr Canning, who on that occasion delivered one of the most noble of all his orations, and soon afterwards, instead of proceeding, as had been arranged, to take on him the supreme government of British India, was called to fill the place in the Cabinet which Lord Londonderry's calamitous death had left vacant. The King's stay in Scotland was protracted until the 29th of August. He then embarked from the Earl of Hopetoun's magnificent seat on the Firth of Forth, and Sir Walter had the gratification of seeing his Majesty, in the moment of departure, confer the honour of knighthood on two of his friends—both of whom,

I believe, owed some obligation in this matter to his good offices—namely, Captain Adam Ferguson, deputy-keeper of the Regalia, and Henry Raeburn, R.A., properly selected as the representative of the fine arts in Scotland. This amiable man and excellent artist, however, did not long survive the receipt of his title. Sir Henry died on the 8th of July, 1823—the last work of his pencil having been, as already mentioned, a portrait of Scott.

On the eve of the King's departure he received the following communication :—

*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., &c. &c., Castle Street.*

" Edinburgh, August 28, 1822.

" My dear Sir,

" The King has commanded me to acquaint you, that he cannot bid adieu to Scotland without conveying to you individually his warm personal acknowledgments for the deep interest you have taken in every ceremony and arrangement connected with his Majesty's visit, and for your ample contributions to their complete success.

" His Majesty well knows how many difficulties have been smoothed, and how much has been effected by your unremitting activity, by your knowledge of your countrymen, and by the just estimation in which they hold you.

" The King wishes to make you the channel of conveying to the Highland chiefs and their followers, who have given to the varied scene which we have witnessed so peculiar and romantic a character, his particular thanks for their attendance, and his warm approbation of their uniform deportment. He does justice to the ardent spirit of loyalty by which they are animated, and is convinced that he could offer no recompense for their services so gratifying to them as the assurance, which

I now convey, of the esteem and approbation of their Sovereign.

"I have the honour to be, my dear Sir, with great truth, most truly and faithfully yours,

ROBERT PEEL."

Sir Walter forwarded copies of Mr Peel's paragraph touching the Highlanders to such heads of clans as had been of late in his counsels, and he received very grateful letters in return from Macleod, Glengarry, Sir Evan MacGregor, and several others of the order, on their return to the hills—as also from the Countess (now Duchess-Countess) of Sutherland, whose son, Lord Francis, had, as she playfully expressed it, "been out" as her representative at the head of the most numerous and best appointed of all the kilted detachments. Glengarry was so delighted with what the Secretary of State had said, that the paragraph in question soon found its way to the newspapers; and then there appeared, in some Whig journal, a sarcastic commentary upon it, insinuating that, however highly the King might now choose to eulogize the poet and his Celtic allies, his Majesty had been considerably annoyed with much of their arrangements and proceedings, and that a visible coolness had, in fact, been manifested towards Sir Walter during the King's stay in the north. As this idle piece of malice has been revived in some formal biographies of recent date, I may as well dispose of it for ever, by extracting the following notes, which passed in the course of the next month between Scott and the Secretary of the Admiralty, whose official duty, I presume, it was to be in waiting at Ramsgate when the King disembarked from his yacht.—The "Dean Cannon" to whom these notes allude, was a clerical humorist, Dean of a fictitious order, who sat to Mr

Theodore Hooke for the jolly "Rector of Fuddle-cum-Pipes" in his novel of "Maxwell."

*To J. W. Croker, Esq., M.P., Admiralty, London.*

"Abbotsford, Thursday.

"My dear Croker,

"What have you been doing this fifty years? We had a jolly day or two with your Dean Cannon at Edinburgh. He promised me a call if he returned through the Borders; but, I suppose, passed in the midst of the royal turmoil, or, perhaps, got tired of sheep's-head and haggis in the pass of Killiekrankie. He was wrong if he did; for even Win Jenkins herself discovered that where there were heads there must be bodies; and my forest haunch of mutton is noway to be sneezed at.—Ever yours, WALTER SCOTT."

*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Abbotsford.*

"Admiralty, Sept. 29, 1822.

"My dear Scott,

"I wish it *were* 'fifty years since' you had heard of me, as, perhaps, I should find myself by and by celebrated, like the Baron of Bradwardine and some other friends of 'sixty years since.'

"I have not seen our Dean since his Scotch tour. I am sorry he was with you in such a period of bustle, as I should have liked to hear his sober observations on the usual style of Edinburgh society.

"I had the honour of receiving his Majesty on his return, when he, after the first three words, began most graciously to tell me 'all about our friend Scott.' Some silly or malicious person, his Majesty said, had reported that there had been some coolness between you, but, he added, that it was utterly false, and that he was, in every respect, highly pleased and gratified, and, he said, *grate-*

*ful* for the devoted attention you had paid him; and he celebrated very warmly the success that had attended all your arrangements.

"Peel has sung your praises to the same tune; and I have been flattered to find that both the King and Peel thought me so much your friend that they, as it were, *reported* to me the merit of 'my friend Scott.'—Yours ever,

J. W. CROKER."

If Sir Walter lost something in not seeing more of Dean Cannon—who, among other social merits, sang the Ballads of Robin Hood with delightful skill and effect—there was a great deal better cause for regret in the unpropitious time selected for Mr Crabbe's visit to Scotland. In the glittering and tumultuous assemblages of that season, the elder bard was (to use one of his friend's favourite similitudes) very like *a cow in a fremd loaning;* and though Scott could never have been seen in colours more likely to excite admiration, Crabbe had hardly any opportunity of observing him in the everyday loveableness of his converse. Sir Walter's enthusiastic excitement about the kilts and the processions, seemed at first utterly incomprehensible to him; but by degrees he caught not a little of the spirit of the time, and even indited a set of stanzas, which have perhaps no other merit than that of reflecting it. He also perceived and appreciated Scott's dexterous management of prejudices and pretensions. He exclaims, in his Journal,—"What a keen discriminating man is my friend!" But I shall ever regret that Crabbe did not see him at Abbotsford among his books, his trees, and his own good simple peasants. They had, I believe, but one quiet walk together, and it was to the ruins of St Anthony's Chapel and Muschat's Cairn, which the

deep impression made on Crabbe by the Heart of Mid-Lothian had given him an earnest wish to see. I accompanied them, and the hour so spent, in the course of which the fine old man gave us some most touching anecdotes of his early struggles, was a truly delightful contrast to the bustle and worry of miscellaneous society which consumed so many of his few hours in Scotland. Scott's family were more fortunate than himself in this respect. They had from infancy been taught to reverence Crabbe's genius, and they now saw enough of him to make them think of him ever afterwards with tender affection.

## CHAP. IX.

MONS MEG—JACOBITE PEERAGES—INVITATION FROM THE GALASHIELS POET—PROGRESS OF ABBOTSFORD HOUSE—LETTERS TO JOANNA BAILLIE—TERRY—LORD MONTAGU, ETC.—COMPLETION AND PUBLICATION OF PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

1822—1823.

THOUGH Mr Crabbe found it necessary to leave Scotland without seeing Abbotsford, this was not the case with many less celebrated friends from the south, who had flocked to Edinburgh at the time of the Royal Festival. Sir Walter's house was, in his own phrase, "like a cried fair," during several weeks after the King's departure; and as his masons were then in the highest activity upon the addition to the building, the bustle and tumult within doors and without was really perplexing. We shall find him confessing that the excitement of the Edinburgh scenes had thrown him into a fever, and that he never needed repose more. He certainly never had less of it.

Nor was an unusual influx of English pilgrims the only legacy of "the glorious days" of August. A considerable number of persons who had borne a part in the ceremonies of the King's reception fancied that their exertions had entitled them to some substantial mark of royal approbation; and post after post brought long-winded despatches from these clamorous enthusiasts, to

him who, of all Scotchmen, was supposed to enjoy, as to matters of this description, the readiest access to the fountain of honour. To how many of these applications he accorded more than a civil answer I cannot tell; but I find that the Duke of York was too good a *Jacobite* not to grant favourable consideration to his request, that one or two poor half-pay officers who had distinguished themselves in the van of *the Celts*, might be, as opportunity offered, replaced in Highland regiments, and so reinvested with the untheatrical "Garb of Old Gaul."

Sir Walter had also a petition of his own. This related to a certain gigantic piece of ordnance, celebrated in the history of the Scottish Jameses under the title of *Mons Meg*, and not forgotten in Drummond's Macaronics—

—— Sicuti Mons Megga crackasset,——

which had been removed from Edinburgh Castle to the Tower of London, after the campaign of 1745. When Scott next saw the King, after he had displayed his person on the chief bastion of the old fortress, he lamented the absence of Mons Meg on that occasion in language which his Majesty could not resist. There ensued a correspondence with the official guardians of Meg—among others, with the Duke of Wellington, then Master-General of the Ordnance, and though circumstances deferred her restoration, it was never lost sight of, and took place finally when the Duke was Prime Minister, which I presume smoothed petty obstacles, in 1828.

But the serious petition was one in which Sir Walter expressed feelings in which I believe every class of his fellow-countrymen were disposed to concur with him very cordially—and certainly none more so than the generous King himself. The object which the poet had at heart was the restoration of the Scottish peer-

ages forfeited in consequence of the insurrections of 1715 and 1745; and the honourable families, in whose favour this liberal measure was soon afterwards adopted, appear to have vied with each other in the expression of their gratefulness for his exertions on their behalf. The following paper seems to be his sketch of the grounds on which the representatives of the forfeited Peers ought to approach the Ministry; and the view of their case thus suggested, was, it will be allowed, dexterously selected, and persuasively enforced.

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"*Hints Respecting an Application for a Reversal of the Attainders in* 1715 *and* 1745.

"Sept. 1822.

"A good many years ago Mr Erskine of Mar, and other representatives of those noble persons who were attainted for their accession to the Rebellions of 1715 and 1745, drew up a humble petition to the King, praying that his Majesty, taking into his royal consideration the long time which had since elapsed, and the services and loyalty of the posterity of the attainted Peers, would be graciously pleased to recommend to Parliament an Act for reversing all attainders passed against those who were engaged in 1715 and 1745, so as to place their descendants in the same situation, as to rank, which they would have held, had such attainders never taken place. This petition, it is believed, was proposed about the time that an Act was passed for restoring the forfeited estates, still in possession of the Crown; and it was imagined that this gracious act afforded a better opportunity for requesting a reversal of the attainders than had hitherto occurred, especially as it was supposed

that the late Lord Melville, the great adviser of the one measure, was equally friendly to the other. The petition in question, however, it is believed, never was presented to the King—it having been understood that the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, was hostile to it, and that, therefore, it would be more prudent not to press it then. It is thought by some, that looking to his Majesty's late paternal and most gracious visit to his ancient kingdom of Scotland, in which he seemed anxious to revive and encourage all the proud recollections of its former renown, and to cherish all associations connected with the events of the olden times, as by the display of the Regalia, by the most distinguished attention to the Royal Archers, and by other similar observances, a fit time has now arrived for most humbly soliciting the royal attention to the state of those individuals, who, but for the conscientious, though mistaken loyalty of their ancestors, would now have been in the enjoyment of ancient and illustrious honours.

"Two objections might, perhaps, occur; but it is hoped that a short statement may be sufficient to remove them. It may be thought, that if the attainders of 1715 and 1745 were reversed, it would be unjust *not* to reverse all attainders which had ever passed in any period of the English history—a measure which might give birth to such a multiplicity of claims for ancient English Peerages, forfeited at different times, as might affect seriously the House of Lords, so as both to render that assembly improperly numerous, and to lower the precedency of many Peers who now sit there. To this it is submitted, as a sufficient answer, that there is no occasion for reversing any attainders previous to the accession of the present royal family, and that the proposed Act might be founded on a gracious declaration of the King, expressive simply of his

wish to have all attainders reversed, for offences against his *own* royal house of Hanover. This limitation would at once give ample room for the display of the greatest magnanimity on the part of the King, and avoid the bad consequences indicated in the objection; for, with the exception of Lords Derwentwater and Widdrington, who joined in the Rebellion of 1715, the only Peers who ever joined in any insurrection against the Hanover family were Peers of Scotland, who, by their restoration, in so far as the families are not extinct, could not add to the number of the House of Lords, but would only occasion a small addition to the number of those already entitled to vote at the election of the Sixteen Representative Peers. And it seems plain, that in such a limitation, there would be no more injustice than might have been alleged against the Act by which the forfeited estates, still in the hands of Government, were restored; while no compensation was given for such estates as had been already sold by Government. The same argument might have been stated, with equal force, against the late reversal of the attainder of Lord Edward Fitzgerald; it might have been asked, with what sort of justice can you reverse this attainder, and refuse to reverse all attainders that ever took place either in England or Ireland? But no such objection was made, and the recommendation of the King to Parliament was received almost with acclamation. And now that the family of Lord E. Fitzgerald have been restored to the rights which he had forfeited, the petition in the present case will, it is hoped, naturally strike his Majesty with greater force, when he is pleased to recollect that his lordship's attainder took place on account of accession to a rebellion, of which the object was to introduce a foreign force into Ireland, to overturn the Constitution, and to produce universal misery; while the elder attainders

now in question were the results of rebellions, undertaken from views of conscientious, though mistaken loyalty in many individuals, who were much attached to their country, and to those principles of hereditary succession to the Throne in which they had been educated, and which, in almost every instance, ought to be held sacred.

"A second objection, perhaps, might be raised, on the ground that the reversal of the attainders in question would imply a censure against the conduct of that Government by which they were passed, and consequently an approval, in some measure, of those persons who were so attainted. But it might as well be said that the reversal of Lord E. Fitzgerald's attainder implied a censure on the Parliament of Ireland, and on the King, by whom that act had been passed; or that the restoration of an officer to the rank from which he had been dismissed by the sentence of a court-martial, approved of by the King, would imply a censure on that court, or on that King. Such implication might, at all events, be completely guarded against by the preamble of the proposed Act—which might condemn the Rebellion in strong terms—but reverse the attainders, from the magnanimous wish of the King to obliterate the memory of all former discord, so far as his own house had been the object of attack, and from a just sense of the meritorious conduct and undoubted loyalty of the descendants of those unfortunate, though criminal individuals. And it is humbly submitted, that as there is no longer any Pretender to his Majesty's Crown, and as all classes of his subjects now regard him as both *de jure* and *de facto* the only true representative of our ancient race of Princes—now is the time for such an act of royal magnanimity, and of Parliamentary munificence, by which the honour of so many noble houses would be

fully restored; while, at the same time, the *station* of the representatives of certain other noble houses, who have assumed titles, their right to which is, under the present law, much more than doubtful, would be fully confirmed, and placed beyond the reach of objection."

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In Scott's collection of miscellaneous MSS. the article that stands next to this draft of "Hints," is one that I must indulge myself with placing in similar juxtaposition here. I have already said something of his friendly relations with the people of the only manufacturing village in his neighbourhood. Among other circumstances highly grateful to them was his regular attendance on the day when their Deacon and Convener for the year entered on his office—which solemnity occurred early in October. On the approach of these occasions he usually received an invitation in verse, penned by a worthy weaver named Thomson, but known and honoured all over Teviotdale as "the Galashiels Poet." At the first of these celebrations that ensued the forthcoming of Rob Roy, this bard delighted his compeers, and not less their guest, by chanting a clever parody on the excellent song of "Donald *Caird*," *i. e. Tinker*, the chorus being—in place of Scott's

> "Dinna let the Sherra ken
> Donald Caird's come again;"—
>
> "*Think ye does the Sherra ken*
> *Rob Mac Gregor's come again:*"

and that was thenceforth a standing ditty on the day of the Deacon. The Sheriff's presence at the installation of 1822 was requested by the following epistle:—

*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Abbotsford.*

*" Murray's Inn, Galashiels,*
*1st Oct.* 1822.

" This year we rather 'gin to falter
If an epistle we should send ye.
Say some, ' Ye only plague Sir Walter,
He canna ilka year attend ye:
Last year, nae doubt, he condescended,
Just to be quit o' your palaver;
But he could ne'er ha'e apprehended
That ilka year ye'd ask the favour.
He's dined but lately wi' the King,
And round him there is sic a splendour,
He winna stoop to such a thing,
For a' the reasons ye can render:
Content yourselves wi' John o' Skye;
Your impudence deserves a wiper:
Ye'll never rest till he grow shy,
And e'en refuse to send his piper.'

" These reasons a' may be withstood,
Wi' nae pretensions for a talker;—
Ye mauna lightly Deacon Wood,
But dine wi' him like Deacon Walker.
Your fav'rite dish is not forgot:
Imprimis for your bill of fare,
We'll put a sheep's-head i' the pot,—
Ye'se get the cantle for your share:
And we've the best o' " Mountain dew,"
Was gather'd whare ye mauna list,
In spite o' a' the gauger crew,
By Scotland's ' children o' the mist.'
Last year your presence made us canty,
For which we hae ye yet to thank;
This year, in faith, we canna want ye,
Ye're absence wad mak sic a blank.—
As a' our neibors are our friends,
The company is not selected;
But for to mak ye some amends,
There's not a social soul neglected.

" We wish you luck o' your new biggin';
There's no the like o't on the Tweed;
Ye'll no mistak it by its riggin',—*
It is an oddity indeed.
To Lady Scott our kind respect—
To her and to Miss Ann our thanks;
We hope this year they'll no neglect
Again to smile upon our ranks.
Upon our other kind regards
At present we will no be treating,
For some discourse we maun hae spared
To raise the friendly crack at meeting.
So ye maun come, if ye can win—
Gie's nae excuse, like common gentry;—
If we suspect, as sure's a gun,
On ABBOTSFORD we'll place a sentry."

It was a pleasant thing to see the annual procession of these weavers of Galashiels—or (for they were proud enough to adopt the name) of *Ganders-cleuch*—as they advanced from their village with John of Skye at their head, and the banners of their craft all displayed, to meet Sir Walter and his family at the ford, and escort them in splendour to the scene of the great festivity. And well pleased was he to "share the triumph and partake the gale" of Deacon Wood or Deacon Walker—and a proud man was Laureate Thomson when his health was proposed by the "brother bard" of Abbotsford. At this Galashiels festival the Ettrick Shepherd also was a regular attendant. He used to come down the night before, and accompany Sir Walter in the only carriage that graced the march; and many of Hogg's best

* The old song says,—

" This is no mine ain house,
I ken by the riggin o't, &c."—*See Collection.*

ballads were produced for the first time amidst the cheers of the men of Ganders-cleuch. Meeting Poet Thomson not long since in a different part of the country, he ran up to me, with the tears in his eyes, and exclaimed, "Eh, sir, it does me good to see you—for it puts me in mind of the grand days in our town, when Scott and Hogg were in their glory—and we were a' leal Tories!" Galashiels is now a nest of Radicalism—but I doubt if it be a happier place than in the times of Deacon Wood and Deacon Walker.

In the following letters we have, as many readers may think, rather too much of the "new biggin" and "the riggin o't"—but I cannot consent to curtail such curiously characteristic records of the days when Scott was finishing Peveril of the Peak, and projecting his inimitable portraitures of Louis XI. and Charles of Burgundy.

*To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.*

"Abbotsford, October 5, 1822.

"My dear Terry,

"I have been 'a *vixen* and a *griffin*,' as Mrs Jenkins says, for many days—in plain truth, very much out of heart. I know you will sympathize particularly with me on the loss of our excellent friend W. Erskine, who fell a victim to a hellishly false story which was widely circulated concerning him, or rather I should say to the sensibility of his own nature, which could not endure even the shadow of reproach—like the ermine, which is said to pine to death if its fur is soiled. And now Hay Donaldson* has followed him, an excellent man, who long

* Mr Hay Donaldson drew up an affecting sketch of his friend Lord Kinnedder's Life and Character, to which Scott made some additions, and which was printed, but not, I think, for public circulation. He died shortly afterwards, on the 30th of September, 1822.

managed my family affairs with the greatest accuracy and kindness. The last three or four years have swept away more than half the friends with whom I lived in habits of great intimacy—the poor Duke, Jocund Johnnie, Lord Somerville, the Boswells, and now this new deprivation. So it must be with us

"When ance life's day draws near the gloamin,"*—

and yet we proceed with our plantations and plans as if any tree but the sad cypress would accompany us to the grave, where our friends have gone before us. It is the way of the world, however, and must be so, otherwise life would be spent in unavailing mourning for those whom we have lost. It is better to enjoy the society of those who remain to us. I am heartily glad, my dear Terry, that you have carried through your engagement so triumphantly, and that your professional talents are at length so far appreciated as to place you in the first rank in point of emolument as in point of reputation. Your talents, too, are of a kind that will *wear well*, and health permitting, hold out to you a long course of honourable exertion; you should begin to make a little nest-egg as soon as you can; the first little hoard which a man can make of his earnings is the foundation-stone of comfort and independence—so says one who has found it difficult to practise the lesson he offers you. We are getting on here in the old style. The new castle is now roofing, and looks superb; in fact a little too good for the estate, but we must work the harder to make the land suitable. The library is a superb room, but after all I fear the shelves ought not to be less than ten or twelve feet high; I had quite decided for nine feet, but on an exacter measurement this will not accommodate fully the books I

* Burns.

have now in hand, and leaves no room for future purchases. Pray is there not a tolerable book on upholstery—I mean plans for tables, chairs, commodes, and such like? If so, I would be much obliged to you to get me a copy, and send it under Freeling's cover. When you can pick up a few odd books for me, especially dramatic, you will do me a great kindness, and I will remit the blunt immediately. I wish to know what the Montrose sword cost, that I may send the *gratility*. I must look about for a mirror for the drawing-room, large enough to look well between the windows. Beneath, I mean to place the antique mosaic slab which Constable has given me, about four feet and a half in length. I am puzzled about framing it. Another anxious subject with me is fitting up the little oratory—I have three thick planks of West Indian cedar, which, exchanged with black oak, would, I think, make a fine thing. I wish you had seen the King's visit here; it was very grand; in fact, in moral grandeur it was beyond any thing I ever witnessed, for the hearts of the poorest as well as the greatest were completely merged in the business. William Murray behaved excellently, and was most useful. I worked like a horse, and had almost paid dear for it, for it was only a sudden and violent eruption that saved me from a dangerous illness. I believe it was distress of mind, suppressed as much as I could, and mingling with the fatigue: certainly I was miserably ill, and am now only got quite better. I wish to know how Mrs Terry, and you, and my little Walter are; also little Miss. I hope, if I live so long, I may be of use to the former; little misses are not so easily accommodated.—Pray remember me to Mrs Terry. Write to me soon, and believe me, always most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

*To Lieutenant Walter Scott, 15th Hussars, Berlin.*

"Abbotsford, 7th October, 1822.

"My dearest Walter,

"I wrote you a full account of the King's visit, which went off *à merveille.* I suffered a good deal in consequence of excessive fatigue and constant anxiety, but was much relieved by a very inconvenient and nasty eruption which physicians call the *prickly heat.* Ross says if it had not broke out I would have had a bad fever—in the mean-time, though the complaint has gone off, my arms and legs are spotted like a leopard's. The King has expressed himself most graciously to me, both at leaving Edinburgh and since he returned. I know from sure authority he has scarce ever ceased to speak about the Scotch and the fine taste and spirit of their reception.

"Some small accompts of yours have come in. This is wrong—you ought never to leave a country without clearing every penny of debt; and you have no apology for doing so, as you are never refused what I can afford. When you can get a troop I shall expect you to maintain yourself without further recourse on me, except in the case of extraordinary accident, so that, without pinching yourself, you must learn to keep all your expenses within your income; it is a lesson which if not learned in youth lays up much bitter regret for age.

"I am pleased with your account of Dresden, and could have wished you had gone on to Töplitz, Leipsic, &c. At Töplitz Buonaparte had his fatal check, losing Vandamme, and about 10,000 men, who had pressed too unwarily on the allies after raising the siege of Dresden. These are marked events in your profession, and when you are on the ground you ought to compare the scene

of action with such accounts as you can get of the motives and motions of the contending powers.

"We are all quite well here; my new house is quite finished as to masonry, and we are now getting on the roof just in time to face the bad weather. Charles is well at last writing—the Lockharts speak for themselves. Game is very plenty, and two or three pair of pheasants are among the young wood at Abbotslee. I have given strict orders there shall be no shooting of any kind on that side of the hill. Our house has been a little disturbed by a false report that puss had eat up the favourite robin-redbreast who comes every morning to sing for crumbs after breakfast, but the reappearance of Robin exculpates old Hinzie. On your birthday this week you become *major!*—God send you the wit and reflection necessary to conduct yourself as a man; from henceforward, my province will be to advise rather than to command.—Well, we shall have a little jollification, and drink your health on becoming legally major, which, I suppose, *you* think a much less matter than were you to become so in the military term.

"Mamma is quite well, and with Ann and Cousin Walter join in compliments and love.—Always affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

In the next letter to Terry, Scott refers to the death of an amiable friend of his, Mr James Wedderburne, Solicitor-General for Scotland, which occurred on the 7th November; and we have an indication that Peveril of the Peak had reached the fourth volume, in his announcement of the subject for Quentin Durward.

*To D. Terry, Esq. London.*

"Abbotsford, Nov. 10th, 1822.

"My dear Terry,

"I got all the plans safe, and they are delightful. The library ceiling will be superb, and we have plenty of ornaments for it without repeating one of those in the eating-room. The plan of shelves is also excellent, and will, I think, for a long time suffice my collection. The brasses for the shelves I like—but not the price: the notched ones, after all, do very well. I have had three grand hawls since I last wrote to you. The pulpit, repentance-stool, King's seat, and God knows how much of carved wainscot, from the kirk of Dunfermline, * enough to coat the hall to the height of seven feet:—supposing it boarded above, for hanging guns, old portraits, intermixed with armour, &c.—it will be a superb entrance-gallery: this is hawl the first. Hawl second is twenty-four pieces of the most splendid Chinese paper, twelve feet high by four wide, a present from my cousin Hugh Scott, † enough to finish the drawing-room and two bed-rooms. Hawl third is a quantity of what is called Jamaica cedar-wood, enough for fitting up both the drawing-room and the library, including the presses, shelves, &c.: the wood is finely pencilled and most beautiful, something like the colour of gingerbread; it costs very little more than oak, works much easier, and is never touched by vermin of any kind. I sent Mr Atkinson a specimen, but it was from the plain end of the plank: the interior is finely waved and variegated. Your kind and unremitting exertions in our favour will soon plenish the drawing-

* For this *hawl* Sir Walter was indebted to the Magistrates of Dunfermline.

† Captain Hugh Scott, of the East India Company's Naval Service (now of Draycote House, near Derby), second son to the late Laird of Raeburn.

room. Thus we at present stand. We have a fine old English cabinet, with china, &c.—and two superb elbow-chairs, the gift of Constable, carved most magnificently, with groups of children, fruit, and flowers, in the Italian taste: they came from Rome, and are much admired. It seems to me that the mirror you mention, being framed in carved box, would answer admirably well with the chairs, which are of the same material. The mirror should, I presume, be placed over the drawing-room chimney-piece; and opposite to it I mean to put an antique table of mosaic marbles, to support Chantrey's bust. A good sofa would be desirable, and so would the tapestry-screen, if really fresh and beautiful; but as much of our furniture will be a little antiquated, one would not run too much into that taste in so small an apartment. For the library I have the old oak chairs now in the little armoury, eight in number, and we might add one or two pair of the ebony chairs you mention. I should think this enough, for many seats in such a room must impede access to the books; and I don't mean the library to be on ordinary occasions a public room. Perhaps the tapestry-screen would suit better here than in the drawing-room. I have one library table here, and shall have another made for atlases and prints. For the hall I have four chairs of black oak. In other matters we can make it out well enough. In fact, it is my object rather to keep under my new accommodations at first, both to avoid immediate outlay, and that I may leave room for pretty things which may occur hereafter. I would to Heaven I could take a cruize with you through the brokers, which would be the pleasantest affair possible, only I am afraid I should make a losing voyage of it. Mr Atkinson has missed a little my idea of the oratory, fitting it up entirely as a bookcase, whereas I should like to have had recesses for curiosities—for the

Bruce's skull*—for a crucifix, &c. &c.—in short, a little cabinet instead of a book-closet. Four sides of books would be perfectly sufficient; the other four, so far as not occupied by door or window, should be arranged tastefully for antiquities, &c., like the inside of an antique cabinet, with drawers, and shottles, and funny little arches. The oak screen dropped as from the clouds: it is most acceptable; I might have guessed there was only one kind friend so ready to supply hay to my hobby-horse. You have my views in these matters and your own taste; and I will send the *needful* when you apprise me of the amount total. Where things are not quite satisfactory, it is better to wait a while on every account, for the amusement is over when one has room for nothing more. The house is completely roofed, &c., and looks worthy of Mrs Terry's painting. I never saw any thing handsomer than the grouping of towers, chimneys, &c. upon the roof, when seen at a proper distance.

"Once more, let me wish you joy of your professional success. I can judge, by a thousand minute items, of the advance you make with the public, just as I can of the gradual progress of my trees, because I am interested in both events. You may say, like Burke, you were not 'coaxed and dandled into eminence,' but have fought your way gallantly, shown your passport at every barrier, and been always a step in advance, without a single retrograde movement. Every one wishes to advance rapidly, but when the desired position is gained, it is far more easily maintained by him whose ascent has been gradual, and whose favour is founded not on the unreasonable expectations entertained from one or two seasons, but from an habitual experience of the power of pleasing

* A cast of the skull of King Robert the Bruce, made when his tomb was discovered during some repairs of Dunfermline Abbey, in 1819.

during several years. You say not a word of poor Wattles. I hope little Miss has not put his nose out of joint entirely.

"I have not been very well—a whoreson thickness of blood, and a depression of spirits arising from the loss of friends (to whom I am now to add poor Wedderburne), have annoyed me much; and Peveril will, I fear, smell of the apoplexy. I propose a good rally, however, and hope it will be a powerful effect. My idea is, *entre nous*, a Scotch archer in the French King's guard, *tempore* Louis XI., the most picturesque of all times.—Always yours very faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

This letter contains the first allusion to the species of malady that ultimately proved fatal to Sir Walter Scott. He, as far as I know, never mentioned to any one of his family the symptoms which he here speaks of; but long before any serious apoplectic seizure occurred, it had been suspected by myself, and by others of his friends, that he had sustained slight attacks of that nature, and concealed them.

The depression of spirits of which he complains, could not, however, have hung over him long; at least it by no means interrupted any of his usual occupations. A grievous interruption had indeed been occasioned by the royal visit, its preparations, and its legacy of visitants and correspondence; but he now laboured to make up his lee-way, and Peveril of the Peak was completed, and some progress had also been achieved with the first volume of Quentin Durward, before the year reached its close. Nor had he ceased to contemplate future labour, and continued popularity, with the same firmness and hopefulness as ever. He had, in the course of October, completed his contract, and received Constable's bills,

for another unnamed "work of fiction;" and this was the last such work in which the great bookseller of Edinburgh was destined to have any concern. The engagement was in fact that redeemed three years afterwards by *Woodstock*.

Sir Walter was, as may be supposed, stimulated in all these matters by the music of the hammer and saw at Abbotsford. Witness this letter, written during the Christmas recess—

*To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.*

"Abbotsford, January 9th, 1823.

"Dear Terry,

"It is close firing to answer letters the day they come to hand, but I am afraid of losing opportunities, as in the case of the mirror, not to be retrieved. I am first to report progress, for your consideration and Mr Atkinson's, of what I have been doing here. Every thing about the house has gone *à rien mieux*, and the shell is completely finished; all the upper story and garrets, as well as the basement, have had their first coat of plaster, being first properly fenced from the exterior air. The only things which we now greatly need are the designs for the ceilings of the hall and drawing-room, as the smiths and plasterers are impatient for their working plans, the want of which rather stops them. I have taken actual, real, and corporal possession of my sitting-room, which has been fitted with a temporary floor, door, and window—the oratory, and the door into the library, being bricked up *ad interim*. This was a step of necessity, as my books began to suffer in Peter's garret, so they were brought up to the said room, and are all ranged in their old shelves and presses, so as to be completely comeatable. They have been now there a fortnight without the least appearance of damp, so dry

do the brick facings make the wall; and as we keep good fires in the place (which, by the by, vents like all Mr Atkinson's chimneys, in a superior style), I intend they shall remain there till they are transferred to *the* Library, so that this room will be fitted up last of all. I shall be then able to judge of a point on which I have at present some doubt—namely, the capacity of my library to accommodate my books. Should it appear limited (I mean making allowance for future additions) I can perhaps, by Mr Atkinson's assistance, fit up this private room with a gallery, which might enter by carrying the stair up the oratory, and renouncing the idea of fitting it up. The cedar, I assure you, is quite beautiful. I have had it sawn out into planks, and every one who looks at it agrees it will be more beautiful than oak. Indeed, what I have seen of it put to that use, bears no comparison unless with such heart of oak as Bullock employed, and that you know is veneered. I do not go on the cry in this, but practical knowledge, for Mr Waugh, my neighbour, a West Indian planter (but himself bred a joiner), has finished the prettiest apartment with it that I ever saw. I should be apt to prefer the brass notches, were the difference only what you mention, namely, L.20; but I cannot make out how that should be, unless by supposing the joiners' wages much higher than with us. But indeed, in such a library as mine, when the books are once catalogued, I could perhaps in many instances make fixed shelves answer the turn, by adopting a proper arrangement from the beginning. I give up the Roslin drop in the oratory—indeed I have long seen it would not do. I think the termination of it may be employed as the central part of Mr Atkinson's beautiful plan for the recess in the library; by the by, the whole of that ceiling, with the heads we have got, will be the prettiest thing ever seen in these parts.

"The plan preferred for the door between the entrance-hall and ante-room, was that which was marked B. To make this plain, I reinclose A and C—which mode of explaining myself puts me in mind of the evidence of an Irish officer.—'We met three rebels, one we shot, hanged another, the third we flogged and made a guide of.'—'Which of the three did you flog and make a guide of?'—'Him whom we neither shot nor hanged.' Understand, therefore, that the plan not returned is that fixed upon. I think there is nothing left to say about the house excepting the chimney-pieces. I have selected for the hall chimney-piece one of the cloister arches of Melrose, of which I enclose an accurate drawing. I can get it finished here very beautifully, at days' wages, in our dark red freestone. The chimneys of drawing-room, library, and my own room, with grates conforming, will be got much better in London than any where else; by the by, for the hall I have got an old massive chimney-grate which belonged to the old persecutor Bishop Sharp, who was murdered on Magus Muir. All our grates must be contrived to use wood as well as coal, with what are called half-dogs.

"I am completely Lady Wishfort as to the escritoire. In fact, my determination would very much depend on the possibility of showing it to advantage; for if it be such as is set up against a wall, like what is called, *par excellence*, a writing-desk, you know we have no space in the library that is not occupied by book-presses. If, on the contrary, it stands quite free, why, I do not know—I must e'en leave it to you to decide between taste and prudence. The silk damask, I fancy, we must have for the drawing-room curtains; those in the library we shall have of superfine crimson cloth from Galashiels, made of mine own wool. I should like the silk to be sent down in the bales, as I wish these curtains to be made

up on a simple useful pattern, without that paltry trash of drapery, &c. &c. I would take the armoury curtains for my pattern, and set my own tailor, Robin Goodfellow, to make them up; and I think I may save on the charge of such an upholsterer as my friend Mr Trotter much of the difference in the value of materials. The chairs will be most welcome. Packing is a most important article, and I must be indebted to your continued goodness for putting that into proper hands. The mirror, for instance—O Lord, sir!

"Another and most important service would be to procure me, from any person whom Mr Atkinson may recommend, the execution of the enclosed commission for fruit-trees. We dare not trust Edinburgh; for though the trade never makes a pause in furnishing you with the most rare plants, insomuch that an old friend of mine, the original Jonathan Oldbuck, having asked one of them to supply him with a dozen of *anchovies*, he answered 'he had plenty of them, but, being a delicate plant, they were still in the hothouse'—yet, when the said plants come to bear fruit, the owner may adopt the classical line—

'Miratur novas frondes et non sua poma.'

My new gardener is a particularly clever fellow in his way, and thinks the enclosed kinds like to answer best. Our new garden-wall will be up in spring, time enough to have the plants set. By the way, has Mr Atkinson seen the way of heating hot-houses, &c., adapted by Mr Somebody at Glasgow, who has got a patent? It is by a new application of steam, which is poured into a vaulted roof, made completely air-tight, except where it communicates with an iron box, so to speak, a receptacle of the heated air. This vaulted recess is filled with bricks, stones, or such like substances, capable of

receiving and retaining an extreme degree of heat from the steam with which they are surrounded. The steam itself is condensed and carried off; but the air, which for many hours continues to arise from these heated bricks, ascends into the iron receptacle, and is let off by ventilators into the space to be heated in such quantities as may be desired. The excellence of this plan is not only the saving of fuel, but also and particularly the certainty that the air cannot be overheated, for the temperature at hottest does not exceed 95 degrees—nor overchilled, for it continues to retain, and of course to transmit, the same degree of heated air, or but with little variation, for ten or twelve hours, so as to render the process of forcing much more certain and simple than it has been from any means hitherto devised. I dare say that this is a very lame explanation, but I will get a perfect one for Mr Atkinson if he wishes it. The Botanical Garden at Glasgow has adopted the plan, and they are now changing that of Edinburgh for the same purpose. I have not heard whether it has been applied to houses; but, from the principle, I should conceive it practicable.

"Peveril has been stopped ten days, having been driven back to Leith Roads by stress of weather. I have not a copy here, but will write to Ballantyne to send you one forthwith. I am sick of thinking of it myself. We hear of you often, and always of your advancing favour with the public. It is one of many cases in which the dearly beloved public has come round to my decided opinion, after seeming to waver for a time. Washington Irving's success is another instance of the same. Little Walter will, I hope, turn out all we can wish him; and Mrs Terry's health, I would fain hope, will be completely re-established. The steam-boats make a jaunt to Scotland comparatively so speedy and easy, that I hope you will sometimes cast both of yourselves this way. Abbotsford, I am sure, will please you, when

you see all your dreams realized, so far as concerns elevation, &c.

"John Thomson, Duddingstone, has given me his most splendid picture, painted, he says, on purpose for me—a true Scottish scene. It seems to me that many of our painters shun the sublime of our country, by labouring to introduce trees where doubtless by search they might be found, but where most certainly they make no conspicuous part of the landscape, being like some little folks who fill up a company, and put you to the proof before you own to have seen them. Now this is Fast Castle, famous both in history and legend, situated near St Abb's Head, which you most certainly must have seen, as you have cruized along the coast of Berwickshire. The view looks from the land down on the ragged ruins, a black sky and a foaming ocean beyond them. There is more imagination in the picture than in any I have seen of a long time—a sort of Salvator Rosa's doings.—*Revenons à nos moutons.* I find that the plans for the window-shutters of the entrance-hall are much wanted. My wainscot will not be altogether seven feet—about six. Higher it cannot be, because of the pattern of the Dunfermline part; and lower I would not have it, because the armour, &c. must be suspended beyond the reach of busy and rude fingers, to which a hall is exposed. You understand I mean to keep lighter, smaller, and more ornate objects of curiosity in the present little room, and have only the massive and large specimens, with my fine collection of horns, &c., in the hall. Above the wainscot, I propose the wall to be planked and covered with cartridge paper, and then properly painted in wainscot, to match the arrangement beneath.

"I have now, as your own Dogberry says, bestowed all my tediousness upon you;—yet I have still a question

of yours to answer on a certain bookseller's part. Unquestionably I know many interesting works of the kind he mentions which might be translated from the German:—almost all those of Musæus, of which Beddoes made two volumes, and which are admirably written; many of La Motte Fouquè; several from the collection bearing the assumed name of Beit Weber. But there is a point more essential to their success with the British public than even the selection. There is in the German mode of narration, an affectation of deep metaphysical reflection and protracted description and discussion, which the English do not easily tolerate; and whoever translates their narratives with effect should be master of the taste and spirit of both nations. For instance, I lately saw a translation of 'Sintram und seine Gefährten,' or Sintram and his Comrades, the story in the world which, if the plot were insinuated into the *boxes*, as Bayes says, would be most striking, translated into such English as was far more difficult to me than the original German. I do not know where an interpreter such as I point to could be found; but a literal *jog-trotter*, such as translated the passages from Goëthe annexed to the beautiful engravings, which you sent me,* would never make a profitable job. The bibliopole must lay his account to seek out a man of fancy, and pay him well. I suppose my friend Cohen † is above superintending such a work, otherwise he is the man to make something of it. Perhaps he might be induced to take it in hand for the love of the task. All who are here—namely, my lovely lady and the Lady Anne—salute you and Mrs Terry with the most sincere good wishes.—Faithfully yours,

W. Scott.

* I presume this alludes to the English edition of Retsch's Outlines from Faust.

† Mr Cohen is now Sir Francis Palgrave, K.H.

"P.S. Direct to Edinburgh, where I shall be on the 14th. Perhaps the slightest sketch of the escritoire might enable me to decide. If I could swop my own, which cost me L.30, it might diminish my prudential scruples. Poor little Johnnie would have offered the prime cost at once. Your letter shall go to James Ballantyne. I think I have something new likely to be actually dramatical. I will send it you presently; but, on your life, show it no one, for certain reasons. The very name is kept secret, and, strange to tell, it will be printed without one."

The precaution mentioned in this P. S. was really adopted in the printing of Quentin Durward. It had been suggested by a recent alarm about one of Ballantyne's workmen playing foul, and transmitting proof-sheets of Peveril while at press to some American pirate.

Peveril of the Peak appeared, then, in January, 1823. Its reception was somewhat colder than that of its three immediate predecessors. The post-haste rapidity of the Novelist's execution was put to a severe trial, from his adoption of so wide a canvass as was presented by a period of twenty busy years, and filled by so very large and multifarious an assemblage of persons, not a few of them, as it were, struggling for prominence. Fenella was an unfortunate conception; what is good in it is not original, and the rest extravagantly absurd and incredible. Even worse was that condescension to the practice of vulgar romancers, in his treatment of the trial scenes—scenes usually the very citadels of his strength—which outraged every feeling of probability with those who had studied the terrible tragedies of the Popish Plot, in the authentic records of, perhaps, the

most disgraceful epoch in our history. The story is clumsy and perplexed; the catastrophe (another signal exception to his rules) foreseen from the beginning, and yet most inartificially brought about. All this is true; and yet might not criticisms of the same sort be applied to half the masterpieces of Shakspeare? And did any dramatist—to say nothing of any other novelist—ever produce, in spite of all the surrounding bewilderment of the fable, characters more powerfully conceived, or, on the whole, more happily portrayed, than those (I name but a few) of Christian, Bridgenorth, Buckingham, and Chiffinch—sketches more vivid than those of Young Derby, Colonel Blood, and the keeper of Newgate? The severest censor of this novel was Mr Senior; yet he was just as well as severe. He could not dismiss the work without admitting that Peveril, "though entitled to no precedency," was, on the whole, "not inferior to his brethren, taken as a class;" and upon that class he introduced a general eulogy, which I shall gratify my readers by extracting: *

"It had become a trite remark, long before there was the reason for it which now exists, that the Waverley novels are, even from their mere popularity, the most striking literary phenomena of the age. And that popularity, unequalled as it is in its extent, is perhaps more extraordinary in its permanence. It has resisted the tendency of the public, and perhaps of ourselves, much as we struggle against it, to think every subsequent work of the same author inferior to its predecessors, if it be not manifestly superior. It has resisted the satiety which might have been predicted as the necessary consequence of the frequent repetition of similar characters and situations. Above all, it has withstood *pessimum genus inimicorum laudantes*. And, in spite of acute enemies, and clumsy friends, and

* I the rather quote this criticism, as it was published in *the London Review*—a journal which stopped at the second or third Number, and must therefore have had a very narrow circulation.

bungling imitators, each successive novel succeeds in obtaining a fortnight of attention as deep and as exclusive as was bestowed upon the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' or the 'Heart of Mid-Lothian.' We have heard this popularity accounted for in many various ways. It has been attributed to the picturesque reality of Sir Walter Scott's descriptions, to the truth and individuality of his characters, to the depth of his pathos and the gaiety of his humour, to the purity and candour of his morality, and to the clear, flexible, and lively, yet unaffected style, which is so delightful a vehicle of his more substantial merits.

"But we do not think that these qualities, even taken together, sufficiently account for such an effect as has been produced. In almost all of them, he has had equals—in some, perhaps, superiors—and though we know of no writer of any age or any nation who has united all these excellences in so high a degree, their deficiencies have been balanced by strength, in what are our author's weakest points, interest and probability in the fable, and clearness of narration.

"We are inclined to suggest as the additional cause of his success, the manner in which his works unite the most irreconcilable forms, and the most opposite materials. He exhibits, sometimes in succession, and sometimes intermingled, tragedy and the romance, comedy and the novel. Great events, exalted personages, and awful superstitions have, in general, been the exclusive province of the two former. But the dignity which has been supposed to belong to those styles of writing, has in general excluded the representation of the every-day occurrences and familiar emotions, which, though parts of great events, and incident to great people, are not characteristic of either. And as human nature is principally conversant in such occurrences and emotions, it has in general been inadequately or falsely represented in tragedy and romance; inadequately by good writers, and falsely by bad—the former omitting whatever could not be made splendid and majestic, the latter exaggerating what they found really great, and attempting to give importance to what is base and trivial, and sacrificing reason and probability to render freebooters dignified, and make familiar friends converse in heroics. Homer and Euripides are the only exceptions among the ancients; and no modern tragedian, except Shakspeare, has ventured to make a king's son, 'remember that poor creature, small-beer.' Human nature, therefore, fell into the hands of comedians and novelists; but they seem either to have thought that there was something in the feelings and sufferings of ordinary mortality incon-

sistent with those who are made of the porcelain clay of the earth; or not to have formed sufficiently general conceptions, to venture beyond the limits of their own experience. Their characters, therefore, are copied from the originals with whom the writer, and therefore the reader, is familiar: they are placed in situations which derive no interest from their novelty; and the usual catastrophe is an event which every reader has experienced or expected.

"We may compare tragedy to a martyrdom by one of the old masters; which, whatever be its merit, represents persons, emotions, and events so remote from the experience of the spectator, that he feels the grounds of his approbation and blame to be in a great measure conjectural. The romance, such as we generally have seen it, resembles a Gothic window-piece, where monarchs and bishops exhibit the symbols of their dignity, and saints hold out their palm branches, and grotesque monsters in blue and gold pursue one another through the intricacies of a never-ending scroll, splendid in colouring, but childish in composition, and imitating nothing in nature but a mass of drapery and jewels thrown over the commonest outlines of the human figure. The works of the comedian and novelist, in their least interesting forms, are Dutch paintings and caricatures: in their best, they are like Wilkie's earlier pictures, accurate imitations of pleasing, but familiar objects—admirable as works of art, but addressed rather to the judgment than to the imagination.

"Our author's principal agents are the mighty of the earth, often mixed, in his earlier works, with beings of more than earthly attributes. He paints the passions which arm sect against sect, party against party, and nation against nation. He relates, either episodically or as the main object of his narrative, the success or failure of those attempts which permanently affect the happiness of states; conspiracies and rebellions, civil war and religious persecution, the overthrow of dynasties and changes of belief—

> 'There saw I how the secret felon wrought,
> And treason labouring in the traitor's thought;
> On the other side there stood destruction bare,
> Unpunish'd rapine, and a waste of war;
> Contest, with sharpen'd knives in cloysters drawn,
> And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.'

"So far he has nothing in common with the novelist or the comedian. But he writes for times when the veil of high life is rent or torn away—when all men are disposed to scrutinize, and

competent to judge—when they look through and through kings and statesmen, and see that they are and act as mere men. He has, therefore, treated those lofty subjects with a minuteness of detail, and an unsparing imitation of human nature, in its foibles as well as its energies, which few writers, excepting the three whom we have mentioned, have had the boldness and the philosophy to employ in the representation of exalted characters and national events. 'His story requires preachers and kings, but he thinks only on men;' and well aware that independence and flattery must heighten every peculiarity, he has drawn in a royal personage the most laughable picture that perhaps ever was exhibited of human folly and inconsistency. By his intermixture of public and private events, he has shown how they act and re-act on one another; how results which appear, to him who views them from the distance of history, to depend on causes of slow and irresistible operation, are produced, or prevented, or modified, by the passions, the prejudices, the interests, and often the caprice of individuals; and on the other hand, how essential national tranquillity is to individual happiness—what family discord and treachery, what cruelty, what meanness, what insolence, what rapacity, what insecurity—in short, what vice and misery of every kind must be witnessed and felt by those who have drawn the unhappy lot of existence in times of civil war and revolution.

"We have no doubt that his constant introduction of legal proceedings (a subject as carefully avoided by his predecessors) materially assists the plausibility of his narratives. In peaceful times, the law is the lever which sets in motion a great part of our actions, and regulates and controls them all. And if, in times of civil disturbance, its regular and beneficial operation be interrupted (and indeed such an interruption is the criterion, and the great mischief of civil disturbance), yet the forms of law are never in more constant use. Men who would not rob or murder, will sequestrate and condemn. The advantage, the gratification of avarice or hatred, is enjoyed by all—the responsibility is divided; since those who framed the iniquitous law have not to execute it, and those who give effect to it did not create it. The recurrence, therefore, in our author's works, of this mainspring of human affairs, has a double effect. If the story were true, we should expect to meet with it; supposing it fictitious, we should expect it to be absent.

"An example will illustrate much of what we have tediously, and we fear obscurely, attempted to explain. We will take one from Waverley. The principal scenes are laid in a royal palace, on a field of battle, where the kingdom is the stake, and at the head-

quarters of a victorious army. The actors are, an exiled prince, reclaiming the sceptre of his ancestors, and the armed nobility and gentry of his kingdom. So far we are in the lofty regions of romance. And in any other hands than those of Sir Walter Scott, the language and conduct of these great people would have been as dignified as their situations. We should have heard nothing of the hero in his new costume 'majoring afore the muckle pier-glass'—of his arrest by the host of the Candlestick—of his examination by the well-powdered Major Melville—or his fears of being informed against by Mrs Nosebag. The Baron would not have claimed to draw off the princely *caligæ*. Fergus would not have been influenced, in bringing his sister to the camp, by the credit to be obtained through her beauty and accomplishments. We should not have been told of the staff-appointment refused by Waverley, or of the motives which caused him first to march with the M'Ivors, and afterwards with the Baron. In short, we should have had a uniform and imposing representation of a splendid scene, but calculated to leave false recollections with the uninstructed, and none at all with the judicious reader. But when we study the history of the rebellion in Waverley, we feel convinced that, though the details presented to us never existed, yet they must resemble what really happened; and that while the leading persons and events are as remote from those of ordinary life as the inventions of Scuderi, the picture of human nature is as faithful as could have been given by Fielding or Le Sage."

I fear the reader will hardly pardon me for bringing him down abruptly from this fine criticism to a little joke of the Parliament-House. Among its lounging young barristers of those days, Sir Walter Scott, in the intervals of his duty as clerk, often came forth and mingled much in the style of his own coeval *Mountain*. Indeed the pleasure he seemed to take in the society of his professional juniors, was one of the most remarkable, and certainly not the least agreeable features of his character at this period of his consummate honour and celebrity; but I should rather have said, perhaps, of young people generally, male or female, law or lay, gentle or simple. I used to think it was near of kin to another feature

in him, his love of a bright light. It was always, I suspect, against the grain with him, when he did not even work at his desk with the sun full upon him. However, one morning soon after Peveril came out, one of our most famous wags (now famous for better things), namely, Mr Patrick Robertson, commonly called by the endearing Scottish *diminutive* "Peter," observed that tall conical white head advancing above the crowd towards the fire-place, where the usual roar of fun was going on among the briefless, and said, "Hush, boys, here comes old Peveril, I see *the Peak*." A laugh ensued, and the Great Unknown, as he withdrew from the circle after a few minutes' gossip, insisted that I should tell him what our joke upon his advent had been. When enlightened, being by that time half way across "the babbling hall," towards his own *Division*, he looked round with a sly grin, and said, between his teeth, "Ay, ay, my man, as weel Peveril o' the Peak ony day as Peter o' the Painch" (paunch)—which being transmitted to the brethren of *the stove school*, of course delighted all of them, except their portly Coryphæus. But *Peter's* application stuck; to his dying day, Scott was in the Outer House *Peveril of the Peak*, or *Old Peveril*—and, by and by, like a good Cavalier, he took to the designation kindly. He was well aware that his own family and younger friends constantly talked of him under this *sobriquet*. Many a little note have I had from him (and so probably has *Peter* also), reproving, or perhaps encouraging, Tory mischief, and signed, "Thine, PEVERIL."—Specimens enough will occur by and by—but I may as well transcribe one here, doggrel though it be. Calling at my house one forenoon, he had detected me in writing some nonsense for Blackwood's Noctes Ambrosianæ; and after he went home, finding an apology from some friend who had

been expected to dine with a Whiggish party that day in Castle Street, he despatched this billet:—

*To J. G. Lockhart, Esq. Northumberland Street,*

"Irrecoverable sinner,
Work what Whigs you please till dinner,
But be here exact at six,
Smooth as oil with mine to mix.
(Sophy may step up to tea,
Our table has no room for *she*).
Come (your *gum* within your cheek)
And help sweet

PEVERIL OF THE PEAK."

## CHAPTER X.

QUENTIN DURWARD IN PROGRESS—LETTERS TO CONSTABLE—AND DR DIBDIN—THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY AND THE ROXBURGHE CLUB—THE BANNATYNE CLUB FOUNDED—SCOTT CHAIRMAN OF THE EDINBURGH OIL GAS COMPANY, ETC.—MECHANICAL DEVICES AT ABBOTSFORD—GASOMETER—AIR-BELL, ETC., ETC.—THE BELLENDEN WINDOWS.

1823.

It was, perhaps, some inward misgiving towards the completion of Peveril, that determined Scott to break new ground in his next novel; and as he had before awakened a fresh interest by venturing on English scenery and history, try the still bolder experiment of a continental excursion. However this may have been, he was encouraged and strengthened by the return of his friend, Mr Skene, about this time, from a tour in France; in the course of which he had kept an accurate and lively journal, and executed a vast variety of clever drawings, representing landscapes and ancient buildings, such as would have been most sure to interest Scott had he been the companion of his wanderings. Mr Skene's MS. collections were placed at his disposal, and he took from one of their chapters the substance of the *original* Introduction to Quentin Durward. Yet still his difficulties in this new undertaking were frequent, and of a sort to which he had hitherto been a stranger. I remember observing him many times in the Advocates' Library poring over maps and gazetteers with care and

anxiety; and the following is one of many similar notes which his bookseller and printer received during the progress of the novel:—

*To Archibald Constable, Esq.*

"Castle Street, 23d Jan. 1823.

"My dear Constable,

"It is a vile place this village of Plessis les Tours that can baffle both you and me. It is a place famous in history; and, moreover, is, as your Gazetteer assures us, a village of 1000 inhabitants, yet I have not found it in any map, provincial or general, which I have consulted. I think something must be found in Malte Brun's Geographical Works. I have also suggested to Mr Cadell that Wraxall's History of France, or his Travels, may probably help us. In the mean time I am getting on; and instead of description holding the place of sense, I must try to make such sense as I can find hold the place of description.

"I know Hawkwood's story;* he was originally, I believe, a tailor in London, and became a noted leader of Condottieri in Italy.

"I shall be obliged to Mr David† to get from the

* Hawkwood—from whose adventures Constable had thought the author of Quentin Durward might take some hints—began life as apprentice to a London tailor. But, as Fuller says, "he soon turned his needle into a sword, and his thimble into a shield," and raised himself to knighthood in the service of Edward III. After accumulating great wealth and fame in the predatory wars of Italy, he died in 1393, at Florence, where his funeral was celebrated with magnificence amidst the general lamentations of the people.—See "*The Honourable Prentice, or the Life and Death of Sir John Hawkwood*," *&c.* London: 4to. 1615.

† Mr David Constable, eldest son of the great bookseller, had been called to the bar at Edinburgh.

Advocates' Library, and send me, the large copy of Philip de Commines, in 4to. I returned it, intending to bring mine from Abbotsford, but left it in my hurry; and the author is the very key to my period.—Yours ever, WALTER SCOTT."

He was much amused with a mark of French admiration which reached him (opportunely enough) about the same time—one of the few such that his novels seem to have brought him prior to the publication of Quentin Durward. I regret that I cannot produce the letter to which he alludes in the next of these notes; but I have by no means forgotten the excellent flavour of the Champagne which soon afterwards arrived at Abbotsford, in a quantity greatly more liberal than had been stipulated for.

*To A. Constable, Esq.*

"Castle Street, 16th February, 1823.

"My dear Constable,

"I send you a letter which will amuse you. It is a funny Frenchman who wants me to accept some Champagne for a set of my works. I have written, in answer, that as my works cost me nothing I could not think of putting a value on them, but that I should apply to you. Send him by the mediation of Hurst & Robinson a set of my children and god-children (poems and novels), and if he found, on seeing them, that they were worth a dozen flasks of Champagne, he might address the case to Hurst and Robinson, and they would clear it at the custom-house and send it down.

"Pray return the enclosed as a sort of curiosity.—Yours, &c. WALTER SCOTT."

A compliment not less flattering than this French-

man's tender of Champagne was paid to Scott within a few weeks of the appearance of Peveril. In the epistle introductory of that novel, Captain Clutterbuck amuses Dr Jonas Dryasdust with an account of a recent visit from their common parent "the Author of Waverley," whose outward man, as it was in those days, is humorously caricatured, with a suggestion that he had probably sat to Geoffrey Crayon for his "Stout Gentleman of No. II.;" and who is made to apologize for the heartiness with which he pays his duty to the viands set before him, by alleging that he was in training for the approaching anniversary of the Roxburghe Club, whose gastronomical zeal had always been on a scale worthy of their bibliomaniacal renown. "He was preparing himself," said the gracious and portly *Eidolon*, "to hob-nob with the lords of the literary treasures of Althorpe and Hodnet in Madeira negus, brewed by the classical Dibdin"—[why *negus?*]—"to share those profound debates which stamp accurately on each 'small volume, dark with tarnished gold,' its collar, not of S.S., but of R.R.—to toast the immortal memory of Caxton, Valdarfer, Pynson, and the other fathers of that great art which has made all and each of us what we are." This drollery in fact alluded, not to the Roxburghe Club, but to an institution of the same class which was just at this time springing into life, under Sir Walter's own auspices, in Edinburgh—the *Bannatyne Club*, of which he was the founder and first president. The heroes of the Roxburghe, however, were not to penetrate the mystification of Captain Clutterbuck's report, and from their jovial and erudite board, when they next congregated around its "generous flasks of Burgundy, each flanked by an uncut fifteener"—(so I think their reverend chronicler has somewhere de-

picted the apparatus)—the following despatch was forwarded—

*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Edinburgh.*

" Feb. 22, 1823.

" My dear Sir,

" The death of Sir M. M. Sykes, Bart. having occasioned a vacancy in our ROXBURGHE CLUB, I am desired to request that you will have the goodness to make that fact known to the AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY, who, from the Proheme to PEVERIL OF THE PEAK, seems disposed to become one of the members thereof; and I am further desired to express the wishes of the said CLUB that the said AUTHOR may succeed to the said Baronet.—I am ever most sincerely yours,

T. F. DIBDIN, V.P."

Sir Walter's answers to this, and to a subsequent letter of the Vice-President, announcing his formal election, were as follows:—

*To the Rev. Thomas Frognall Dibdin, &c. &c. Kensington.*

" Edin. Feb. 25, 1823.

" My dear Sir,

" I was duly favoured with your letter, which proves one point against the unknown Author of Waverley; namely, that he is certainly a Scotsman, since no other nation pretends to the advantage of second sight. Be he who or where he may, he must certainly feel the very high honour which has selected him, *nominis umbra*, to a situation so worthy of envy.

" As his personal appearance in the fraternity is not like to be a speedy event, one may presume he may be desirous of offering some token of his gratitude in the shape of a reprint, or such-like kickshaw, and for this

purpose you had better send me the statutes of your learned body, which I will engage to send him in safety.

"It will follow as a characteristic circumstance, that the table of the Roxburghe, like that of King Arthur, will have a vacant chair, like that of Banquo at Macbeth's banquet. But if this author, who 'hath fernseed and walketh invisible,' should not appear to claim it before I come to London (should I ever be there again), with permission of the Club, I, who have something of adventure in me, although a knight like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, 'dubbed with unhacked rapier, and on carpet consideration,' would, rather than lose the chance of a dinner with the Roxburghe Club, take upon me the adventure of the *siege perilous*, and reap some amends for perils and scandals into which the invisible champion has drawn me, by being his *locum tenens* on so distinguished an occasion.

"It will be not uninteresting to you to know, that a fraternity is about to be established here something on the plan of the Roxburghe Club; but, having Scottish antiquities chiefly in view, it is to be called the Bannatyne Club, from the celebrated antiquary, George Bannatyne, who compiled by far the greatest record of old Scottish poetry. The first meeting is to be held on Thursday, when the health of the Roxburghe Club will be drunk.—I am always, my dear sir, your most faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

*To the Same.*

"Abbotsford, May 1, 1823.

"My dear Sir,

"I am duly honoured with your very interesting and flattering communication. Our Highlanders have

a proverbial saying, founded on the traditional renown of Fingal's dog; 'If it is not Bran,' they say, 'it is Bran's brother.' Now, this is always taken as a compliment of the first class, whether applied to an actual cur, or parabolically to a biped; and, upon the same principle, it is with no small pride and gratification that I hear the Roxburghe Club have been so very flatteringly disposed to accept me as a *locum tenens* for the unknown author whom they have made the child of their adoption. As sponsor, I will play my part until the real Simon Pure make his appearance.

"Besides, I hope the devil does not owe me such a shame. Mad Tom tells us, that 'the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman;' and this mysterious personage will, I hope, partake as much of his honourable feelings as of his invisibility, and, retaining his incognito, permit me to enjoy, in his stead, an honour which I value more than I do that which has been bestowed on me by the credit of having written any of his novels.

"I regret deeply I cannot soon avail myself of my new privileges; but courts, which I am under the necessity of attending officially, sit down in a few days, and, *hei mihi!* do not arise for vacation until July. But I hope to be in town next spring; and certainly I have one strong additional reason for a London journey, furnished by the pleasure of meeting the Roxburghe Club. Make my most respectful compliments to the members at their next merry-meeting; and express, in the warmest manner, my sense of obligation. —I am always, my dear sir, very much your most obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

In his way of taking both the Frenchman's civilities and those of the Roxburghers, we see evident symptoms

that the mask had begun to be worn rather carelessly. He would not have written this last letter, I fancy, previous to the publication of Mr Adolphus's Essays on the Authorship of Waverley.

Sir Walter, it may be worth mentioning, was also about this time elected a member of "THE CLUB"—that famous one established by Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds, at the Turk's Head, but which has now for a long series of years held its meetings at the Thatched House, in St James's Street. Moreover, he had been chosen, on the death of the antiquary Lysons, Professor of Ancient History to the Royal Academy—a chair originally founded at Dr Johnson's suggestion, "in order that *Goldy* might have a right to be at their dinners," and in which Goldsmith has had several illustrious successors besides Sir Walter. I believe he was present at more than one of the festivals of each of these fraternities. A particular dinner of the Royal Academy, at all events, is recorded with some picturesque details in his essay on the life of his friend John Kemble, who sat next to him upon that occasion.

The Bannatyne Club was a child of his own, and from first to last he took a most fatherly concern in all its proceedings. His practical sense dictated a direction of their funds widely different from what had been adopted by the Roxburghe. Their *Club Books* already constitute a very curious and valuable library of Scottish history and antiquities: their example has been followed with not inferior success by the Maitland Club of Glasgow—which was soon afterwards instituted on a similar model, and of which also Sir Walter was a zealous associate; and since his death a third Club of this class, founded at Edinburgh in his honour, and styled *The Abbotsford Club*, has taken a still wider range—not confining their printing to works connected

with Scotland, but admitting all materials that can throw light on the ancient history or literature of any country, any where described or discussed by the Author of Waverley.

At the meetings of the Bannatyne he regularly presided from 1823 to 1831; and in the chair on their anniversary dinners, surrounded by some of his oldest and dearest friends—Thomas Thomson (the Vice-President), John Clerk (Lord Eldin), the Chief Commissioner Adam, the Chief Baron Shepherd, Lord Jeffrey, Mr Constable—and let me not forget his kind, intelligent, and industrious ally, Mr David Laing, bookseller, the Secretary of the Club—he from this time forward was the unfailing source and centre of all sorts of merriment "within the limits of becoming mirth." Of the origin and early progress of their institution, the reader has a full account in his reviewal of Pitcairn's Ancient Criminal Trials of Scotland, the most important work as yet edited for the Bannatyne press;* and the last edition of his Poems includes his excellent song composed for their first dinner—that of March 9, 1823—and then sung by James Ballantyne, and heartily chorused by all the aforesaid dignitaries:—

"Assist me, ye friends of old books and old wine,
To sing in the praises of Sage Bannatyne,
Who left such a treasure of old Scottish lore,
As enables each age to print one volume more.
One volume more, my friends—one volume more,
We'll ransack old Banny for one volume more."—&c.

On the morning after that first Bannatyne Club dinner, Scott sent such of the Waverley MSS. as he had in Castle Street to Mr Constable, with this note:—

* See Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxi., p. 199.

"Edinburgh, 10th March, 1823.

"Dear Constable,

"You, who have so richly endowed my little collection, cannot refuse me the pleasure of adding to yours. I beg your acceptance of a parcel of MSS., which I know your partialities will give more value to than they deserve; and only annex the condition, that they shall be scrupulously concealed during the author's life, and only made forthcoming when it may be necessary to assert his right to be accounted the writer of these novels.

"I enclose a note to Mr Guthrie Wright, who will deliver to you some others of those MSS. which were in poor Lord Kinnedder's possession; and a few more now at Abbotsford, which I can send in a day or two, will, I think, nearly complete the whole, though there may be some leaves missing.

"I hope you are not the worse of our very merry party yesterday.—Ever yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Various passages in Scott's correspondence have recalled to my recollection the wonder with which the friends best acquainted with the extent of his usual engagements observed, about this period, his readiness in mixing himself up with the business of associations far different from the Bannatyne Club. I cannot doubt that his conduct as President of the Royal Society, and as manager of the preparations for the King's visit, had a main influence in this matter. In both of these capacities he had been thrown into contact with many of the most eminent of his fellow-citizens, who had previously seen little of him personally — including several, and those of especial consequence, who had been accustomed to flavour all their notions of him with some-

thing of the gall of local partisanship in politics. The inimitable mixture of sagacity, discretion, and gentleness which characterised all his intercourse with mankind, was soon appreciated by the gentlemen to whom I allude; for not a few of them had had abundant opportunities of observing and lamenting the ease with which ill humours are engendered, to the disturbance of all really useful discussion, wherever social equals assemble in conclave, without having some official preses, uniting the weight of strong and quick intellect, with the calmness and moderation of a brave spirit, and the conciliating grace of habitual courtesy. No man was ever more admirably qualified to contend with the difficulties of such a situation. Presumption, dogmatism, and arrogance shrunk from the overawing contrast of his modest greatness: the poison of every little passion was shamed and neutralized beneath the charitable dignity of his penetration: and jealousy, fretfulness, and spleen felt themselves transmuted in the placid atmosphere of good sense, good humour, and good manners. And whoever might be apt to plead off on the score of harassing and engrossing personal duty of any sort, Scott had always leisure as well as temper at command, when invited to take part in any business connected with any rational hope of public advantage. These things opened, like the discovery of some new and precious element of wealth, upon certain eager spirits who considered the Royal Society as the great local parent and minister of practical inventions and mechanical improvements; and they found it no hard matter to inspire their genial chief with a warm sympathy in not a few of their then predominant speculations. He was invited, for example, to place himself at the head of a new company for improving the manufacture of oil gas, and in the spring of this year began to officiate regularly in that capacity. Other

associations of a like kind called for his countenance, and received it. The fame of his ready zeal and happy demeanour grew and spread; and from this time, until bodily infirmities disabled him, Sir Walter occupied, as the most usual, acceptable, and successful, chairman of public meetings of almost every conceivable sort, apart from politics, a very prominent place among the active citizens of his native town. Any foreign student of statistics who should have happened to peruse the files of an Edinburgh newspaper for the period to which I allude, would, I think, have concluded that there must be at least two Sir Walter Scotts in the place—one the miraculously fertile author whose works occupied two-thirds of its literary advertisements and critical columns—another some retired magistrate or senator of easy fortune and indefatigable philanthropy, who devoted the rather oppressive leisure of an honoured old age to the promotion of patriotic ameliorations, the watchful guardianship of charities, and the ardent patronage of educational institutions.

The reader will perceive in the correspondence to which I must return, hints about various little matters connected with Scott's own advancing edifice on Tweedside, in which he may trace the President of the Royal Society, and the Chairman of the Gas Company.

Thus, on the 14th of February, he recurs to the plan of heating interiors by steam—and proceeds with other topics of a similar class:—

*To D. Terry, Esq., London.*

"Dear Terry,

"I will not fail to send Mr Atkinson, so soon as I can get it, a full account of Mr Holdsworth of Glasgow's improved use of steam, which is in great acceptation. Being now necessarily sometimes with men of science,

I hear a great deal of these matters; and, like Don Diego Snapshorto with respect to Greek, though I do not understand them, I like the sound of them. I have got a capital stove (proved and exercised by Mr Robison,* who is such a mechanical genius as his father, the celebrated professor,) for the lower part of the house, with a communication for ventilating in the summer. Moreover, I have got for one or two of the rooms a new sort of bell, which I think would divert you. There is neither wire nor crank of any kind; the whole consisting of a tube of tin, such as is used for gas, having at one extremity a cylinder of wider dimensions, and in the other a piece of light wood. The larger cylinder—suppose an inch and a half in diameter—terminates in the apartment, and, ornamented as you please, is the handle, as it were, of the bell. By pressing a piston down into this upper and wider cylinder, the air through the tube, to a distance of a hundred feet if necessary, is suddenly compressed, which compression throws out the light piece of wood, which strikes the bell. The power of compression is exactly like that of the Bramah patent —the acting element being air instead of water. The bell may act as a telegraph by sinking once, twice, thrice, or so forth. The great advantage, however, is, that it never can go out of order—needs no cranks, or pullies, or wires—and can be contorted into any sort of twining or turning, which convenience of communication may require, being simply an air-tight tube. It might be used to communicate with the stable, and I think of something of that kind—with the porter's lodge—with the gardener's house. I have a model now in the room

* Mr John Robison, son of the author of "Elements of Mechanical Philosophy," &c. is now Secretary of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

with me. The only thing I have not explained is, that a small spring raises the piston B when pressed down. I wish you would show this to Mr Atkinson: if he has not seen it, he will be delighted. I have it tried on a tube of fifty feet, and it never fails, indeed *cannot*. It may be called the *ne plus ultra* of bell-ringing—the pea-gun principle, as one may say. As the bell is stationary, it might be necessary (were more than one used) that a little medallion should be suspended in such a manner as to be put in vibration, so as to show the servant which bell has been struck.—I think we have spoke of wellnigh all the commodities wanted at Conundrum Castle worth mentioning. Still there are the carpets.

"I have no idea my present labours will be dramatic in situation: as to character, that of Louis XI., the sagacious, perfidious, superstitious, jocular, and politic tyrant, would be, for a historical chronicle, containing *his life and death*, one of the most powerful ever brought on the stage.—Yours truly,

W. Scott."

A few weeks later, he says to the same correspondent —"I must not omit to tell you that my gas establishment is in great splendour, and working, now that the expense of the apparatus is in a great measure paid, very easily and very cheaply. In point of economy, however, it is not so effective; for the facility of procuring it encourages to a great profusion of light: but then a gallon of the basest train oil, which is used for preference, makes a hundred feet of gas, and treble that quantity lights the house in the state of an illumination for the expense of about 3s. 6d. In our new mansion we should have been ruined with spermaceti oil and wax-candles, yet had not one-tenth part of the light.

Besides, we are entirely freed from the great plague of cleaning lamps, &c. There is no smell whatever, unless a valve is left open, and the gas escapes unconsumed, in which case the scent occasions its being instantly discovered. About twice a-week the gas is made by an ordinary labourer, under occasional inspection of the gardener. It takes about five hours to fill the reservoir gasometer. I never saw an invention more completely satisfactory in the results."

I cannot say that Sir Walter's "century of inventions" at Abbotsford turned out very happily. His new philosophical *ne plus ultra* of bells was found in the sequel a poor succedaneum for the old-fashioned mechanism of the simple wire; and his application of gas-light to the interior of a dwelling-house was in fact attended with so many inconveniences, that erelong all his family heartily wished it had never been thought of. Moreover, Sir Walter had deceived himself as to the expense of such an apparatus when maintained for the uses of a single domestic establishment. He easily made out that his gas *per se* cost him less than the wax, oil, and tallow requisite to produce an equal quantity of light would have done; but though he admitted that no such quantity of artificial light was necessary either for comfort or splendour, nor would ever have been dreamt of had its supply been to come from the chandler's store, "the state of an illumination" was almost constantly kept up. Above all, he seems to have, by some trickery of the imagination, got rid in his estimate of all memory of the very considerable sum expended on the original fabric and furnishing of his gasometer, and lining wall upon wall with so many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of feet of delicate pipe work,—and, in like manner, to have counted for nothing the fact that he had a workman of superior cha-

racter employed during no slender portion of every year in the manufacture. He himself, as has been mentioned before, delighted at all times in a strong light, and was not liable to much annoyance from the delicacy of his olfactory nerves. To the extremes of heat and cold, too, he was nearly indifferent. But the blaze and glow, and occasional odour of gas, when spread over every part of a private house, will ever constitute a serious annoyance for the majority of men—still more so of women—and in a country place where skilful repair, in case of accident, cannot be immediately procured, the result is often a misery. The effect of the new apparatus in the dining-room at Abbotsford was at first superb. In sitting down to table, in Autumn, no one observed that in each of three chandeliers (one of them being of very great dimensions) there lurked a little tiny bead of red light. Dinner passed off, and the sun went down, and suddenly, at the turning of a screw, the room was filled with a gush of splendour worthy of the palace of Aladdin; but, as in the case of Aladdin, the old lamp would have been better in the upshot. Jewelry sparkled, but cheeks and lips looked cold and wan in this fierce illumination; and the eye was wearied, and the brow ached, if the sitting was at all protracted. I confess, however, that my chief enmity to the whole affair arises from my conviction that Sir Walter's own health was damaged, in his latter years, in consequence of his habitually working at night under the intense and burning glare of a broad star of gas, which hung, as it were, in the air, immediately over his writing table.

These philosophical novelties were combined with curiously heterogeneous features of decoration.—*e. g.*—

*To the Lord Montagu, &c. Ditton Park, Windsor.*

" Edinburgh, February 20, 1823.

" My dear Lord,

" I want a little sketch of your Lordship's arms, on the following account. You are to know that I have a sort of entrance-gallery, in which I intend to hang up my old armour, at least the heavier parts of it, with sundry skins, horns, and such like affairs. That the two windows may be in unison, I intend to sport a little painted glass, and as I think heraldry is always better than any other subject, I intend that the upper compartment of each window shall have the shield, supporters, &c. of one of the existing dignitaries of the clan of Scott; and, of course, the Duke's arms and your Lordship's will occupy two such posts of distinction. The corresponding two will be Harden's and Thirlestane's,* the only families now left who have a right to be regarded as chieftains; and the lower compartments of each window will contain eight shields (without accompaniments), of good gentlemen of the name, of whom I can still muster sixteen bearing separate coats of arms. There is a little conceit in all this, but I have long got beyond the terror of

> ' Lord, what will all the people say!
> Mr Mayor, Mr Mayor?'

and, like an obstinate old-fashioned Scotchman, I buckle my belt my ain gate,—and so I will have my *Bellenden* † *windows*.—Ever yours faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

* Lord Napier has his peerage, as well as the corresponding surname, from a female ancestor; in the male blood he is *Scott, Baronet of Thirlestane*—and indeed some antiquaries of no mean authority consider him as now the male representative of Buccleuch. I need not remind the reader that both Harden and Thirlestane make a great figure in the Lay of the Last Minstrel.

† *Bellenden* was the old war-cry of Buccleuch.

The following letter, addressed to the same nobleman at his seat in the New Forest, opens with a rather noticeable paragraph. He is anxious that the guardian of Buccleuch should not omit the opportunity of adding another farm in Dumfriesshire, to an estate which already covered the best part of three or four counties!

*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. Beaulieu Abbey, Hants.*

"June 18th, 1828.

"My dear Lord,

"Your kind letter reached me just when, with my usual meddling humour, I was about to poke your Lordship on the subject of the farm near Drumlanrig. I see officially that the upset price is reduced. Now, surely you will not let it slip you: the other lots have all gone higher than valuation, so, therefore, it is to be supposed the estimation cannot be very much out of the way, and surely, as running absolutely into sight of that fine castle, it should be the Duke's at all events. Think of a vile four-cornered house, with plantations laid out after the fashion of scollops (as the women call them) and pocket handkerchiefs, cutting and disfiguring the side of the hill, in constant view. The small property has a tendency to fall into the great one, as the small drop of water, as it runs down the pane of a carriage-window, always joins the larger. But this may not happen till we are all dead and gone; and N O W are three important letters of the alphabet, mighty slippery, and apt to escape the grasp.

"I was much interested by your Lordship's account of Beaulieu; I have seen it from the water, and admired it very much, but I remember being told an evil genius haunted it in the shape of a low fever, to which the inhabitants were said to be subject. The woods were the most noble I ever saw. The disappearance of

the ancient monastic remains may be accounted for on the same principle as elsewhere—a desire of the grantees of the Crown to secularize the appearance of the property, and remove at least the external evidence that it had ever been dedicated to religious uses —pretty much on the principle on which the light-fingered gentry melt plate so soon as it comes into their possession, and give the original metal a form which renders it more difficult to re-assume it—this is a most unsavoury simile. The various mutations in religion, and consequently in property of this kind, recommended such policy. Your Lordship cannot but remember the Earl of Pembroke, in Edward the Sixth's time, expelling the nuns from Wilton—then in Queen Mary's re-inducting them into their nunnery, himself meeting the abbess, barefooted and in sackcloth, in penance for his sacrilege—and finally, again turning the said abbess and her vassals adrift in the days of good Queen Bess, with the wholesome admonition—'Go spin, you jades, go spin.' Something like the system of demolition which probably went on during these uncertain times was practised by what was called in France La Bande Noire, who bought chateaux and abbeys, and pulling them down, sold the materials for what they would bring —which was sometimes sufficient to help well towards payment of the land, when the assignats were at an immense depreciation.

"I should like dearly to have your Lordship's advice about what I am now doing here, knowing you to be one of those

'Who in trim gardens take their pleasure.'

I am shutting my house in with a court-yard, the interior of which is to be laid out around the drive in flower-plots and shrubbery, besides a trellised walk.

This I intend to connect with my gardens, and obtain, if possible, some thing (*parvum componere magnis*), like the comfort of Ditton, so preferable to the tame and poor waste of grass and gravel by which modern houses are surrounded. I trust to see you all here in autumn. —Ever yours, faithfully,

W. Scott."

In answering the foregoing letter, Lord Montagu mentioned to Scott the satisfaction he had recently had in placing his nephew the Duke of Buccleuch under the care of Mr Blakeney, an accomplished gentleman and old friend, who had been his own fellow-student at Cambridge. He also rallied the poet a little on his yearning for acres; and hinted that that craving is apt to draw inconveniently even on a ducal revenue. Scott says in reply—

*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c.*

"My dear Lord,

"I am delighted that you have got such a tutor for Walter as entirely satisfies a person so well acquainted with mankind as your Lordship; and I am not afraid that a friend of yours should be imbued with any of very dangerous qualities, which are sometimes found in the instructors placed around our noble youths. Betwixt a narrow-minded pedantry, which naturally disgusts a young man, and the far more formidable vices of flattery, assentation, and self-seeking of all kinds, there are very few of the class of men who are likely to adopt the situation of tutor, that one is not afraid to trust near the person of a boy of rank and fortune. I think it is an argument of your friend's good sense and judgment, that he thinks the knowledge of domestic history essential to his pupil. It is in fact the accomplishment which, of

all others, comes most home to the business and breast of a public man—and the Duke of Buccleuch can never be regarded as a private one. Besides, it has, in a singular degree, the tendency to ripen men's judgment upon the wild political speculations now current. Any one who will read Clarendon with attention and patience, may regard *veluti in speculo* the form and pressure of our own times, if you will just place the fanaticism of atheism and irreligion instead of that of enthusiasm, and combine it with the fierce thirst after innovation proper to both ages. Men of very high rank are, I have noticed, in youth peculiarly accessible to the temptations held out to their inexperience by the ingenious arguers upon speculative politics. There is popularity to be obtained by listening to these lecturers—there is also an idea of generosity, and independence, and public spirit, in affecting to hold cheap the privileges which are peculiarly their own—and there may spring in some minds the idea (a very vain one) that the turret would seem higher, and more distinguished, if some parts of the building that overtop it were pulled down. I have no doubt Mr Blakeney is aware of all this, and will take his own time and manner in leading our young friend to draw from history, in his own way, inferences which may apply to his own times. I will consider anxiously what your Lordship mentions about a course of Scottish study. We are still but very indifferently provided with Scotch histories of a general description.* Lord Hailes' Annals are the foundation-stone, and an excellent book, though dryly written.

* See some remarks on the Scottish historians in Sir Walter's reviewal of the first and second volumes of Mr P. F. Tytler's elaborate work—a work which he had meant to criticize throughout in similar detail, for he considered it as a very important one in itself, and had, moreover, a warm regard for the author—the son of his

Pinkerton, in two very unreadable quartos, which yet abound in information, takes up the thread where Hailes drops it—and then you have Robertson, down to the Union of the crowns. But I would beware of task-work, which Pinkerton at least must always be, and I would relieve him every now and then by looking at the pages of old Pitscottie, where events are told with so much *naïveté*, and even humour, and such individuality as it were, that it places the actors and scenes before the reader. The whole history of James V. and Queen Mary may be read to great advantage in the elegant Latin of Lesly, Bishop of Ross, and, collated with the account which his opponent, Buchanan, in language still more classical, gives of the same eventful reigns. Laing is but a bad guide through the seventeenth century, yet I hardly know where a combined account of these events is to be had, so far as Scotland is concerned, and still less where we could recommend to the young Duke an account of Scottish jurisprudence that is not too technical. All this I will be happy to talk over with your Lordship, for that our young friend should possess this information in a general way is essential to his own comfort and the welfare of many.

"About the land I have no doubt your Lordship is quite right, but I have something of what is called the *yeard hunger*.* I dare say you will get the other lots *à bon marché*, when you wish to have them; and, to be sure, a ducal dignity is a monstrous beast for devouring ready

early friend Lord Woodhouselee. His own Tales of a Grandfather have, however unambitiously undertaken, supplied a more just and clear guide of Scottish history to the general reader, than any one could have pointed out at the time when this letter was addressed to Lord Montagu.

* Earth-hunger.

cash. I do not fear, on the part of Duke Walter, those ills which might arise to many from a very great command of ready money, which sometimes makes a young man, like a horse too full of spirits, make too much play at starting, and flag afterwards. I think improvident expenditure will not be his fault, though I have no doubt he will have the generous temper of his father and grandfather, with more means to indulge an expense which has others for its object more than mere personal gratification. This I venture to foretell, and hope to see the accomplishment of my prophecy; few things could give me more pleasure.

"My court-yard rises, but masons, of all men but lovers, love the most to linger ere they depart. Two men are now tapping upon the summit of my gate as gently as if they were laying the foundation-stone of a Methodist meeting-house, and one plumber 'sits, sparrow-like, companionless,' upon the top of a turret which should have been finished a month since. I must go, and, as Judge Jefferies used to express it, give them a lick with the rough side of my tongue, which will relieve your Lordship sooner than might otherwise have been.

"Melrose is looking excellently well. I begin to think taking off the old roof would have hurt it, at least externally, by diminishing its effect on the eye. The lowering the roofs of the aisles has had a most excellent effect. Sir Adam is well, and his circle augmented by his Indian brother, Major Ferguson, who has much of the family manners—an excellent importation, of course, to Tweedside.—Ever yours truly,

W. Scott."

In April of this year, Sir Walter heard of the death of his dear brother Thomas Scott, whose son had been for two years domesticated with him at Abbotsford,

and the rest of that family were soon afterwards his guests for a considerable time. Among other visitants of the same season were Miss Edgeworth and her sisters, Harriet and Sophia. After spending a few weeks in Edinburgh, and making a tour into the Highlands, they gave a fortnight to Abbotsford; and thenceforth the correspondence between Scott and the most distinguished of contemporary novelists, was of that confiding and affectionate character which we have seen largely exemplified in his intercourse with Joanna Baillie. His first impressions of his new friend are given in this letter to Mr Terry.

*To D. Terry, Esq., London.*

" Castle Street, June 18, 1823.

" My marbles! my marbles! O what must now be done?
My drawing-room is finish'd off, but marbles there are none.
My marbles! my marbles! I fancied them so fine,
The marbles of Lord Elgin were but a joke to mine.*

" In fact we are all on tip-toe now for the marbles and the chimney-grates, which being had and obtained, we will be less clamorous about other matters. I have very little news to send you: Miss Edgeworth is at present the great lioness of Edinburgh, and a very nice lioness; she is full of fun and spirit; a little slight figure, very active in her motions, very good-humoured, and full of enthusiasm. Your descriptions of the chiffonieres made my mouth water: but Abbotsford has cost rather too much for one year, with the absolutely necessary expenses, and I like to leave something to succeeding years, when we may be better able to afford to get our matters made tasty. Besides, the painting of the house should

* Sir Walter is parodying the Spanish Ballad " My ear-rings! my ear-rings are dropt into the well," &c.

be executed before much curious furniture be put in; next spring, perhaps, we may go prowling together through the brokers' purlieus. I enclose you a plan of my own for a gallery round my own room, which is to combine that advantage with a private staircase at the same time, leaving me possession of my oratory; this will be for next year—but I should like to take Mr Atkinson's sentiments about it. Somebody told me, I trust inaccurately, that he had not been well. I have not heard of him for some time, and I owe him (besides much kindness which can only be paid with gratitude) the suitable compensation for his very friendly labours in my behalf. I wish you would poke him a little, with all delicacy, on this subject. We are richer than when Abbotsford first began, and have engrossed a great deal of his most valuable time. I think you will understand the plan perfectly. A private staircase comes down from my dressing-room, and opens upon a book gallery; the landing-place forms the top of the oratory, leaving that cabinet seven feet high; then there is a staircase in the closet which corresponds with the oratory, which you attain by walking round the gallery. This staircase might be made to hang on the door and pull out when it is opened, which is the way abroad with an *escalier derobé*.* I might either put shelves under the gallery, or place some of my cabinets there, or partly both.—Kind compliments to Mrs Terry, in which all join.

"Yours most truly,

W. Scott.

"P.S.—The quantity of horns that I have for the hall would furnish the whole world of cuckoldom; arrived

* Sir Walter had in his mind a favourite cabinet of Napoleon's at the *Elysée Bourbon*, where there are a gallery and concealed staircase such as he here describes.

this instant a new cargo of them, Lord knows from whence. I opened the box, thinking it might be the damask, and found it full of sylvan spoils. Has an old-fashioned consulting desk ever met your eye in your rambles? I mean one of those which have four faces, each forming an inclined plane, like a writing-desk, and made to turn round as well as to rise, and be depressed by a strong iron screw in the centre, something like a one-clawed table; they are old-fashioned, but choicely convenient, as you can keep three or four books, folios if you like, open for reference. If you have not seen one, I can get one made to a model in the Advocates' library. Some sort of contrivances there are too for displaying prints, all which would be convenient in so large a room, but can be got in time."

## CHAPTER XI.

QUENTIN DURWARD PUBLISHED—TRANSACTIONS WITH CONSTABLE—DIALOGUES ON SUPERSTITION PROPOSED—ARTICLE ON ROMANCE WRITTEN—ST RONAN'S WELL BEGUN—"MELROSE IN JULY"—ABBOTSFORD VISITED BY MISS EDGEWORTH—AND BY MR ADOLPHUS—HIS MEMORANDA—EXCURSION TO ALLANTON—ANECDOTES—LETTERS TO MISS BAILLIE, MISS EDGEWORTH, MR TERRY, &c.—PUBLICATION OF ST RONAN'S WELL.

1823.

A DAY or two after the date of the preceding letter, Quentin Durward was published; and surpassing as its popularity was eventually, Constable, who was in London at the time, wrote in cold terms of its immediate reception.

Very shortly before the bookseller left Edinburgh for that trip, he had concluded another bargain (his last of the sort) for the purchase of Waverley copyrights—acquiring the author's property in the Pirate, Nigel, Peveril, and also Quentin Durward, out and out, at the price of five thousand guineas. He had thus paid for the copyright of novels (over and above the half profits of the early separate editions) the sum of L.22,500; and his advances upon "works of fiction" still in embryo, amounted at this moment to L.10,000 more. He began, in short, and the wonder is that he began so late, to suspect that the process of creation was moving too rapidly. The publication of different sets of the novels in a collective form may probably have had a share in opening his eyes to

the fact, that the voluminousness of an author is any thing but favourable to the rapid diffusion of his works as library books—the great object with any publisher who aspires at founding a solid fortune. But he merely intimated on this occasion that he thought the pecuniary transactions between Scott and himself had gone to such an extent that, considering the usual chances of life and health, he must decline contracting for any more novels until those for which his house had already advanced monies (or at least *bills*) should have been written.

Scott himself appears to have admitted for a moment the suspicion that he had been overdoing in the field of romance; and opened to Constable the scheme of a work on popular superstitions, in the form of dialogue, for which he had long possessed ample materials in his thorough mastery of perhaps the most curious library of *diablerie* that ever man collected. But before Constable had leisure to consider this proposal in all its bearings, Quentin Durward, from being, as Scott expressed it, *frost-bit*, had emerged into most fervid and flourishing life. In fact, the sensation which this novel, on its first appearance, created in Paris, was extremely similar to that which attended the original Waverley in Edinburgh, and Ivanhoe afterwards in London. For the first time Scott had ventured on foreign ground, and the French public, long wearied of the pompous tragedians and feeble romancers, who had alone striven to bring out the ancient history and manners of their country in popular forms, were seized with a fever of delight when Louis XI. and Charles the Bold started into life again at the beck of the Northern Magician. Germany had been fully awake to his merits years before, but the public there also felt their sympathies appealed to with hitherto unmatched strength and effect. The infection of admiration ran far and wide on the

Continent, and soon re-acted most potently upon Britain. Discussing the various fortunes of these novels a few years after, Mr Senior says—

"Almost all the characters in his other novels are drawn from British history or from British domestic life. That they should delight nations differing so much from ourselves and from one another in habits and in literary taste, who cannot appreciate the imitation of our existing manners, or join in our historical associations; that the head of 'Le Sieur Valtere Skote' should be pointed out by a Hungarian tradesman as the portrait of 'l'homme le plus célébre en l'Europe;' that his works should employ the translators and printers of Leipsic and Paris, and even relieve the ennui of a Rothenturn quarantine on the extreme borders of European civilisation, is, as Dr Walsh* has well observed, the strongest proof that their details are founded on deep knowledge of the human character, and of the general feelings recognised by all. But Quentin Durward has the additional advantage of scenery and characters possessing European interest. It presents to the inhabitants of the Netherlands and of France, the most advanced of the continental nations, a picture of the manners of their ancestors, incomparably more vivid and more detailed than is to be found in any other narrative, either fictitious or real: and that picture is dignified by the introduction of persons whose influence has not even yet ceased to operate.

"Perhaps at no time did the future state of Europe depend more on the conduct of two individuals than when the crown of France and the coronet of Burgundy descended on Louis XI. and Charles the Bold. The change from real to nominal sovereignty, which has since been the fate of the empire of Germany, was then impending over the kingdom of France. And if that throne had been filled, at this critical period, by a monarch with less courage, less prudence, or more scrupulous than Louis, there seems every reason to suppose that the great feudatories would have secured their independence, and the greater part of that country might now be divided into many petty principalities, some Catholic, and some Protestant, principally intent on excluding each other's commodities, and preventing the mutual ruin which would have been predicted as the necessary consequence of a free trade between Gascony and Languedoc.

"On the other hand, if the race of excellent sovereigns who

* See Walsh's Journey to Constantinople.

governed Burgundy for a hundred and twenty years had been continued—or, indeed, if Duke Philip had been followed by almost any other person than his brutal son, the rich and extensive countries, which under his reign constituted the most powerful state in Europe, must soon have been formed into an independent monarchy —a monarchy far greater and better consolidated than the artificial kingdom lately built up out of their fragments, and kept together rather by the pressure of surrounding Europe than by any internal principles of cohesion.* From the times of Louis XI. until now, France has been the master-spring in European politics, and Flanders merely an arena for combat. The imagination is bewildered by an attempt to speculate on the course which human affairs might have taken if the commencement of the fifteenth century had found the Low Countries, Burgundy, and Artois one great kingdom, and Normandy, Brittany, Provence, and the other fiefs of the French crown, independent principalities.

"In addition to their historical interest, Sir Walter had the good fortune to find in Charles and Louis characters as well contrasted as if they had been invented for the purposes of fiction. Both were indeed utterly selfish, but there the resemblance ends. The duke's ruling principle was vanity, and vanity of the least intellectual kind. His first object was the fame of a conqueror, or rather of a soldier, for in his battles he seems to have aimed more at showing courage and personal strength than the calmness and combination of a general. His other great source of delight was the exhibition of his wealth and splendour,—in the pomp of his dress and his retinue. In these ignoble pursuits he seems to have been utterly indifferent to the sufferings he inflicted on others, and to the risks he himself encountered; and ultimately threw away his life, his army, and the prosperity of his country, in a war undertaken without any object, for he was attacking those who were anxious to be his auxiliaries, and persevered in, after success was impossible, merely to postpone the humiliation of a retreat.

"Louis's object was power; and he seems to have enjoyed the rare felicity of being unaffected by vanity. He had both intrepidity and conduct in battle—far more of the latter indeed than his ferocious rival; but no desire to display these qualities led him into war, if his objects could be otherwise obtained. He fought those only

* This criticism was published (in the London Review) long before the Revolt of Brussels, in 1830, divided Belgium from Holland.

whom he could not bribe or deceive. The same indifference to mere opinion entitled him to Commines' praise as "eminently wise in adversity." When it was not expedient to resist, he could retreat, concede, and apologize, without more apparent humiliation than the king in chess when he moves out of check. He was rapacious, because wealth is a source of power, and because he had no sympathy with those whom he impoverished; but he did not, like his rival, waste his treasures on himself, or on his favourites—he employed them either in the support of his own real force, or in keeping in his pay the ministers and favourites of other sovereigns, and sometimes the sovereigns themselves. His only personal expense was in providing for the welfare of his soul, which he conciliated with his unscrupulous ambition, by allowing the saints his intercessors a portion of his spoils. Our author's picture of his superstition may appear at first sight overcharged, but the imaginary prayer ascribed to him is scarcely a caricature of his real address to Notre Dame de Clery, which we copy in Brantome's antiquated spelling—

"'Ah, ma bonne Dame, ma petite Maistresse, ma grande ame, en qui j'ay eu tousjours mon reconfort. Je te prie de supplier Dieu pour moy, et estre mon advocate envers luy, qu'il me pardonne la mort de mon frere—que j'ay fait empoisonner par ce meschant Abbé de S. Jean. Je m'en confesse a toi, comme à ma bonne patronne et maistresse. Mais aussi, qu'eusse-je seeu faire? Il ne me faisoit que troubler mon royaume. Fay moy doncques pardonner, ma bonne Dame; *et je sçay ce que je te donneray.*'

"Sir Walter has made good use of these excellent materials. His Louis and his Charles are perfectly faithful copies, with all the spirit and consistency which even *he* could have given to creations of his own. The narrative, too, is flowing and connected: each event depends on that which preceded it, without any of the episodes, recapitulations, and sudden changes of scene, which in many of his works weaken the interest, and distract the attention of the reader."

The result of Quentin Durward, as regards the contemporary literature of France, and thence of Italy and the Continent generally, would open a field for ample digression. As concerns Scott himself, the rays of foreign enthusiasm speedily thawed the frost of Constable's unwonted misgivings; the Dialogues on Superstition, if he ever began them, were very soon dropped, and the Novelist resumed his pen. He had not sunk under the

short-lived frown—for he wrote to Ballantyne, on first ascertaining that a damp was thrown on his usual manufacture,

> "The mouse who only trusts to one poor hole,
> Can never be a mouse of any soul;"

and, while his publisher yet remained irresolute as to the plan of Dialogues, threw off, with unabated energy, his excellent Essay on Romance, for the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica; and I cannot but consider it as another display of his high self-reliance, that, *though* he well knew to what influence Quentin owed its ultimate success in the British market, he, the instant he found himself encouraged to take up the trade of story-telling again, sprang back to Scotland—nay, voluntarily encountered new difficulties, by selecting the comparatively tame, and unpicturesque realities of modern manners in his native province.

A conversation, which much interested me at the time, had, I fancy, some share at least in this determination. As he, Laidlaw, and myself were *lounging* on our ponies, one fine calm afternoon, along the brow of the Eildon hill where it overhangs Melrose, he mentioned to us gaily the *row*, as he called it, that was going on in Paris about Quentin Durward, and said, "I can't but think that I could make better play still with something German." Laidlaw grumbled at this, and said, like a true Scotchman, "Na, na, sir—take my word for it, you are always best, like Helen MacGregor, when your foot is on your native heath; and I have often thought that if you were to write a novel, and lay the scene *here* in the very year you were writing it, you would exceed yourself."—"Hame's hame," quoth Scott, smiling, "be it ever sae hamely. There's something in what you say, Willie. What suppose I

were to take Captain Clutterbuck for a hero, and never let the story step a yard beyond the village below us yonder?"—" The very thing I want," says Laidlaw; " stick to Melrose in July 1823."—" Well, upon my word," he answered, " the field would be quite wide enough—and *what for no?*"—(This pet phrase of Meg Dods was a *Laidlawism.*)—Some fun followed about the different real persons in the village that might be introduced with comical effect; but as Laidlaw and I talked and laughed over our worthy neighbours, his air became graver and graver; and he at length said, " Ay, ay, if one could look into the heart of that little cluster of cottages, no fear but you would find materials enow for tragedy as well as comedy. I undertake to say there is some real romance at this moment going on down there, that, if it could have justice done to it, would be well worth all the fiction that was ever spun out of human brains." He then told us a tale of dark domestic guilt which had recently come under his notice as Sheriff, and of which the scene was not Melrose, but a smaller hamlet on the other side of the Tweed, full in our view; but the details were not of a kind to be dwelt upon;—any thing more dreadful was never conceived by Crabbe, and he told it so as to produce on us who listened all the effect of another *Hall of Justice.* It could never have entered into his head to elaborate such a tale; but both Laidlaw and I used to think that this talk suggested St Ronan's Well—though my good friend was by no means disposed to accept that as payment in full of his demand, and from time to time afterwards would give the Sheriff a little poking about " Melrose in July."

Before Sir Walter settled to the new novel, he received Joanna Baillie's long-promised Collection of Poetical Miscellanies, in which appeared his own dramatic

sketch of Macduff's Cross. When Halidon Hill first came forth, there were not wanting reviewers who hailed it in a style of rapture, such as might have been expected had it been a Macbeth. But this folly soon sunk; and I only mention it as an instance of the extent to which reputation bewilders and confounds even persons who have good brains enough when they find it convenient to exercise them. The second attempt of the class produced no sensation whatever at the time; and both would have been long since forgotten, but that they came from Scott's pen. They both contain some fine passages—Halidon Hill has, indeed, several grand ones. But, on the whole, they always seemed to me most egregiously unworthy of Sir Walter; and, now that we have before us his admirable letters on dramatic composition to Allan Cunningham, it appears doubly hard to account for the rashness with which he committed himself in even such slender attempts on a species of composition, of which, in his cool hour, he so fully appreciated the difficult demands. Nevertheless, I am very far from agreeing with those critics who have gravely talked of Halidon Hill, and Macduff's Cross, and the still more unfortunate Doom of Devorgoil, as proving that Sir Walter could not have succeeded in the drama, either serious or comic. It would be as fair to conclude, from the abortive fragment of the Vampyre, that Lord Byron could not have written a good novel or romance in prose. Scott threw off these things *currente calamo*; he never gave himself time to consider beforehand what could be made of their materials, nor bestowed a moment on correcting them after he had covered the allotted quantity of paper with blank verse; and neither when they were new, nor ever after, did he seem to attach the slightest importance to them.

Miss Baillie's volume contained several poems by

Mrs Hemans,—some *jeux d'esprit* by the late Miss Catherine Fanshawe, a woman of rare wit and genius, in whose society Scott greatly delighted,—and, *inter alia*, Mr William Howison's early ballad of Polydore, which had been originally published, under Scott's auspices, in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1810.

*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

" Edinburgh, July 11, 1823.

" Your kind letter, my dear friend, heaps coals of fire on my head, for I should have written to you, in common gratitude, long since; but I waited till I should read through the Miscellany with some attention, which as I have not yet done, I can scarce say much to the purpose, so far as that is concerned. My own production sate in the porch like an evil thing, and scared me from proceeding farther than to hurry through your compositions, with which I was delighted, and two or three others. In my own case, I have almost a nervous reluctance to look back on any recent poetical performance of my own. I may almost say with Macbeth,—

> " I am afraid to think what I have done.
> Look on't again I dare not."

But the best of the matter is, that your purpose has been so satisfactorily answered—and great reason have you to be proud of your influence with the poem-buyers as well as the poem-makers. By the by, you know your request first set me a hammering on an old tale of the Swintons, from whom, by the mother's side, I am descended, and the tinkering work I made of it warmed the heart of a cousin * in the East Indies, a descendant of the renowned Sir Allan, who has sent his kindred poet by this fleet not a butt of sack, but a pipe of most parti-

* George Swinton, Esq. (now of Swinton), was at this time Secretary to the Council in Bengal.

cular Madeira. You and Mrs Agnes shall have a glass of it when you come to Abbotsford, for I always consider your last only a payment to account—you did not stay half the time you promised. I am going out there on Friday, and shall see all my family re-united around me for the first time these many years. They make a very good figure as 'honest men and bonny lasses.' I read Miss Fanshawe's pieces, which are quite beautiful. Mrs Hemans is somewhat too poetical for my taste—too many flowers I mean, and too little fruit—but that may be the cynical criticism of an elderly gentleman; for it is certain that when I was young, I read verses of every kind with infinitely more indulgence, because with more pleasure than I can now do—the more shame for me now to refuse the complaisance which I have had so often to solicit. I am hastening to think prose a better thing than verse, and if you have any hopes to convince me to the contrary, it must be by writing and publishing another volume of plays as fast as possible. I think they would be most favourably received; and beg, like Burns, to

——"tell you of mine and Scotland's drouth,
Your servant's humble ——"

A young friend of mine, Lord Francis Gower, has made a very fair attempt to translate Goethe's untranslatable play of Faust, or Faustus. He has given also a version of Schiller's very fine poem on Casting the Bell, which I think equals Mr Sotheby's—nay, privately (for tell it not in Epping Forest, whisper it not in Hampstead), rather outdoes our excellent friend. I have not compared them minutely, however. As for Mr Howison, such is the worldly name of Polydore, I never saw such a change in my life upon a young man. It may be fourteen years, or thereabouts, since he introduced himself to me, by send-

ing me some most excellent verses for a youth of sixteen years old. I asked him to Ashestiel, and he came —a thin hectic youth, with an eye of dark fire, a cheek that coloured on the slightest emotion, and a mind fraught with feeling of the tender and the beautiful, and eager for poetical fame—otherwise, of so little acquaintance with the world and the world's ways, that a sucking-turkey might have been his tutor. I was rather a bear-like nurse for such a lamb-like charge. We could hardly indeed associate together, for I was then eternally restless, and he as sedentary. He could neither fish, shoot, or course—he could not bear the inside of a carriage with the ladies, for it made him sick, nor the outside with my boys, for it made him giddy. He could not walk, for it fatigued him, nor ride, for he fell off. I did all I could to make him happy, and it was not till he had caught two colds and one sprain, besides risking his life in the Tweed, that I gave up all attempts to convert him to the things of this world. Our acquaintance after this languished, and at last fell asleep, till one day last year I met at Lockhart's a thin consumptive-looking man, bent double with study, and whose eyes seemed to have been extinguished almost by poring over the midnight lamp, though protected by immense green spectacles. I then found that my poet had turned metaphysician, and that these spectacles were to assist him in gazing into the millstone of moral philosophy. He looked at least twice as old as he really is, and has since published a book, very small in size, but, from its extreme abstracted doctrines, more difficult to comprehend than any I ever opened in my life.* I will take

* "An Essay on the Sentiments of Attraction, Adaptation, and Variety. To which are added, A Key to the Mythology of the An-

care he has one of my copies of the Miscellany. If he gets into the right line, he will do something remarkable yet.

"We saw, you will readily suppose, a great deal of Miss Edgeworth, and two very nice girls, her younger sisters. It is scarcely possible to say more of this very remarkable person than that she not only completely answered, but exceeded the expectations which I had formed. I am particularly pleased with the *naïveté* and good-humoured ardour of mind which she unites with such formidable powers of acute observation. In external appearance, she is quite the fairy of our nursery-tale, the Whippity Stourie, if you remember such a sprite, who came flying through the window to work all sorts of marvels. I will never believe but what she has a wand in her pocket, and pulls it out to conjure a little before she begins to those very striking pictures of manners. I am grieved to say, that, since they left Edinburgh on a tour to the Highlands, they have been detained at Forres by an erysipelas breaking out on Miss Edgeworth's face. They have been twelve days there, and are now returning southwards, as a letter from Harriet informs me. I hope soon to have them at Abbotsford, where we will take good care of them, and the invalid in particular. What would I give to have you and Mrs Agnes to meet them, and what canty cracks we would set up about the days of langsyne! The increasing powers of steam, which, like you, I look on half-proud, half-sad, half-angry, and half-pleased, in doing so much for the commercial world, promise something also for the sociable; and, like Prince Houssein's tapestry, will, I think, one day waft friends together in the course of a few hours, and, for aught we may be able to tell, bring

cients; and Europe's Likeness to the Human Spirit. By William Howison." Edinburgh: 1822.

Hampstead and Abbotsford within the distance of,—'Will you dine with us quietly to-morrow?' I wish I could advance this happy abridgment of time and space, so as to make it serve my present wishes.

"Abbotsford, July 18, ——

"I have, for the first time these several years, my whole family united around me, excepting Lockhart, who is with his yeomanry, but joins us to-morrow. Walter is returned a fine steady soldier-like young man from his abode on the Continent, and little Charles, with his friend Surtees, has come from Wales, so that we draw together from distant quarters. When you add Sophia's baby, I assure you my wife and I look very patriarchal. The misfortune is, all this must be soon over, for Walter is admitted one of the higher class of students in the Military College, and must join against the 1st of August. I have some chance, I think, when he has had a year's study, of getting him upon the staff in the Ionian islands, which I should greatly prefer to his lounging about villages in horse-quarters; he has a strong mathematical turn, which promises to be of service in his profession; little Charles is getting steadily on with his learning—but to what use he is to turn it I scarce know yet.—I am very sorry indeed that the doctor is complaining—he whose life has been one course of administering help and comfort to others, should not, one would think, suffer himself; but such are the terms on which we hold our gifts—however valuable to others, they are sometimes less available to ourselves. I sincerely hope this will find him better, and Mrs Baillie easier in proportion. When I was subject a little to sore throats, I cured myself of that tendency by spunging my throat, breast, and shoulders every morning with the coldest water I could

get; but this is rather a horse remedy, though I still keep up the practice. All here, that is, wives, maidens, and bachelors bluff, not forgetting little John Hugh, or, as he is popularly styled, Hugh Littlejohn, send loving remembrances to you and Mrs Agnes.—Ever, dear Mrs Joanna, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The next month—August 1823—was one of the happiest in Scott's life. Never did I see a brighter day at Abbotsford than that on which Miss Edgeworth first arrived there—never can I forget her look and accent when she was received by him at his archway and exclaimed, "Everything about you is exactly what one ought to have had wit enough to dream!" The weather was beautiful, and the edifice, and its appurtenances, were all but complete; and day after day, so long as she could remain, her host had always some new plan of gaiety. One day there was fishing on the Cauldshiels Loch, and a dinner on the heathy bank. Another, the whole party feasted by Thomas the Rymer's waterfall in the glen—and the stone on which Maria that day sat was ever afterwards called *Edgeworth's stone.* A third day we had to go further a-field. He must needs show her, not Newark only, but all the upper scenery of the Yarrow, where "fair hangs the apple frae the rock,"—and the baskets were unpacked about sunset, beside the ruined Chapel overlooking St Mary's Loch—and he had scrambled to gather bluebells and heath-flowers, with which all the young ladies must twine their hair,—and they sang and he recited until it was time to go home beneath the softest of harvest moons. Thus a fortnight was passed—and the vision closed; for Miss Edgeworth

never saw Abbotsford again during his life; and I am very sure she could never bear to look upon it now that the spirit is fled.

Another honoured and welcome guest of the same month was Mr J. L. Adolphus—the author of the Letters to Heber; and I am enabled to enrich these pages with some reminiscences of that visit—the first of several he paid to Abbotsford—which this gentleman has been so kind as to set down for my use, and I am sure for the gratification of all my readers. After modestly recounting the circumstances which led to his invitation to Abbotsford, my friendly contributor says:—

"With great pleasure and curiosity, but with something like awe, I first saw this celebrated house emerge from below the plantation which screened it from the Selkirk and Melrose road. Antique as it was in design, it had not yet had time to take any tint from the weather, and its whole complication of towers, turrets, galleries, cornices, and quaintly ornamented mouldings looked fresh from the chisel, except where the walls were enriched with some really ancient carving or inscription. As I approached the house, there was a busy sound of masons' tools; the shrubbery before the windows was strewed with the works of the carpenter and stonecutter, and with grotesque antiquities, for which a place was yet to be found; on one side were the beginnings of a fruit and flower garden; on another, but more distant, a slope bristling with young firs and larches; near the door murmured an unfinished fountain.

"I had seen Sir Walter Scott, but never met him in society, before this visit. He received me with all his well-known cordiality and simplicity of manner. The circumstances under which I presented myself were peculiar, as the only cause of my being under his roof was one which could not without awkwardness be alluded

to, while a strict reserve existed on the subject of the Waverley novels. This, however, did not create any embarrassment; and he entered into conversation as if any thing that might have been said with reference to the origin of our acquaintance had been said an hour before. I have since been present at his first reception of many visitors; and upon such occasions, as indeed upon every other, I never saw a man who, in his intercourse with all persons, was so perfect a master of courtesy. His manners were so plain and natural, and his kindness took such immediate possession of the feelings, that this excellence in him might for a while pass almost unobserved. I cannot pay a higher testimony to it than by owning that I first fully appreciated it from his behaviour to others. His air and aspect, at the moment of a first introduction, were placid, modest, and, for his time of life, venerable. Occasionally, where he stood a little on ceremony, he threw into his address a deferential tone, which had in it something of old-fashioned politeness, and became him extremely well.

"A point of hospitality in which Sir Walter Scott never failed, whatever might be the pretensions of the guest, was to do the honours of conversation. When a stranger arrived, he seemed to consider it as much a duty to offer him the resources of his mind as those of his table; taking care, however, by his choice of subjects, to give the visiter an opportunity of making his own stores, if he had them, available. I have frequently observed this—with admiration both of his powers and of his discriminating kindness. To me, at the time of my first visit, he addressed himself often as to a member of his own profession; and indeed he seemed always to have a real pleasure in citing from his own experience as an advocate and a law officer. The first book he recommended to me for an hour's occupation

in his library, was an old Scotch pamphlet of the trial of Philip Stanfield (published also in the English State Trials); a dismal and mysterious story of murder, connected slightly with the politics of the time of James II., and having in it a taste of the marvellous.*

"It would, I think, be extremely difficult to give a just idea of his general conversation to any one who had not known him. Considering his great personal and literary popularity, and the wide circle of society in which he had lived, it is perhaps remarkable that so few of his sayings, real or imputed, are in circulation. But he did not affect sayings; the points and sententious turns, which are so easily caught up and transmitted, were not natural to him: though he occasionally expressed a thought very pithily and neatly. For example, he once described the Duke of Wellington's style of debating as 'slicing the argument into two or three parts, and helping himself to the best.' But the great charm of his 'table-talk' was in the sweetness and *abandon* with which it flowed,—always, however, guided by good sense and taste; the warm and unstudied eloquence with which he expressed rather sentiments than opinions; and the liveliness and force with which he narrated and described: and all that he spoke derived so much of its effect from indefinable felicities of manner, look, and tone—and sometimes from the choice of apparently insignificant words—that a moderately faithful transcript of his sentences would be but a faint image of his conversation.

"At the time of my first and second visits to Abbots-

* See the case of Philip Stanfield's alleged parricide, and Sir Walter Scott's remarks thereupon, in his edition of "Lord Fountainhall's Chronological Notes on Scottish Affairs," pp. 233–36; and compare an extract from one of his early note-books, given *ante*, vol. i. p. 261.

ford, in 1823 and 1824, his health was less broken, and his spirits more youthful and buoyant, than when I afterwards saw him, in the years from 1827 to 1831. Not only was he inexhaustible in anecdote, but he still loved to exert the talent of dramatizing, and in some measure representing in his own person the incidents he told of, or the situations he imagined. I recollect, for instance, his sketching in this manner (it was, I think, *apropos* to some zoological discussion with Mr William Stewart Rose) a sailor trying to persuade a monkey to speak, and vowing, with all kinds of whimsical oaths, that he would not tell of him.* On the evening of my first arrival, he took me to see his 'wild man,' as he called him, the celebrated Tom Purdie, who was in an outhouse, unpacking some Indian idols, weapons, and carved work, just arrived from England. The better to exhibit Tom, his master played a most amusing scene of wonder, impatience, curiosity, and fear lest any thing should be broken or the candle fall into the loose hay of the packages, but all this with great submission to the better judgment of the factotum, who went on gravely breaking up and unpapering after his own manner, as if he had been sorting some toys for a restless child. Another specimen of his talent for representation, which struck me forcibly about the same time, was his telling the story (related in his Letters on Demonology) of a dying man who, in a state of delirium, while his nurse was absent, left his room, appeared at a club of which he was president, and was taken for his own ghost. In relating this not very likely story, he described with his deep and lingering tones, and with gestures and looks suited to each part of the

* Mr Rose was at this time meditating his entertaining little *jeu d'esprit*, entitled "Anecdotes of Monkeys."

action, the sick man, deadly pale and with vacant eyes, walking into the club-room; the silence and consternation of the club; the supposed spectre moving to the head of the table; giving a ghastly salutation to the company; raising a glass towards his lips; stiffly turning his head from side to side, as if pledging the several members; his departure, just at midnight; and the breathless conference of the club, as they recovered themselves from this strange visit. St Ronan's Well was published soon after the telling of this story, and I have no doubt that Sir Walter had it in his mind in writing one of the last scenes of that novel.

"He read a play admirably well, distinguishing the speeches by change of tone and manner, without naming the characters. I had the pleasure of hearing him recite, shortly before it was published, his own spirited ballad of 'Bonny Dundee;' and never did I listen to more 'eloquent music.' This was in one of the last years of his life, but the lines

> 'Away, to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks!
> Ere I own a usurper, I'll couch with the fox!'

could not, in his most vigorous days, have been intonated with more fire and energy.

"In conversation he sometimes added very strikingly to the ludicrous or pathetic effect of an expression by dwelling on a syllable; *holding the note*, as it would have been called in music. Thus I recollect his telling, with an extremely droll emphasis, that once, when a boy, he was '*cuffed*' by his aunt for singing,

> 'There's nae repentance in my heart,
> The fiddle's in my arms!'*

* These lines are from the old ballad, "Macpherson's Lament," —the ground-work of Burns's glorious "Macpherson's Farewell."— See Scott's *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xvii., p. 259.

"No one who has seen him can forget the surprising power of change which his countenance showed when awakened from a state of composure. In 1823, when I first knew him, the hair upon his forehead was quite grey, but his face, which was healthy and sanguine, and the hair about it, which had still a strong reddish tinge, contrasted rather than harmonized with the sleek, silvery locks above; a contrast which might seem rather suited to a jovial and humorous, than to a pathetic expression. But his features were equally capable of both. The form and hue of his eyes (for the benefit of minute physiognomists it should be noted, that the pupils contained some small specks of brown) were wonderfully calculated for showing great varieties of emotion. Their mournful aspect was extremely earnest and affecting; and, when he told some dismal and mysterious story, they had a doubtful, melancholy, exploring look, which appealed irresistibly to the hearer's imagination. Occasionally, when he spoke of something very audacious or eccentric, they would dilate and light up with a tragic-comic, harebrained expression, quite peculiar to himself; one might see in it a whole chapter of *Cœur-de-lion* and the Clerk of Copmanhurst. Never, perhaps, did a man go through all the gradations of laughter with such complete enjoyment, and a countenance so radiant. The first dawn of a humorous thought would show itself sometimes, as he sat silent, by an involuntary lengthening of the upper lip, followed by a shy sidelong glance at his neighbours, indescribably whimsical, and seeming to ask from their looks whether the spark of drollery should be suppressed or allowed to blaze out. In the full tide of mirth he did indeed 'laugh the heart's laugh,' like Walpole, but it was not boisterous and overpowering, nor did it check the course of his words; he could go

on telling or descanting, while his lungs did 'crow like chanticleer,' his syllables, in the struggle, growing more emphatic, his accent more strongly Scotch, and his voice plaintive with excess of merriment.

"The habits of life at Abbotsford, when I first saw it, ran in the same easy, rational, and pleasant course which I believe they always afterwards took; though the family was at this time rather straitened in its arrangements, as some of the principal rooms were not finished. After breakfast Sir Walter took his short interval of study in the light and elegant little room afterwards called Miss Scott's. That which he occupied when Abbotsford was complete, though more convenient in some material respects, seemed to me the least cheerful* and least private in the house. It had, however, a recommendation which, perhaps, he was very sensible of, that, as he sat at his writing-table, he could look out at his young trees. About one o'clock he walked or rode, generally with some of his visiters. At this period he used to be a good deal on horseback, and a pleasant sight it was to see the gallant old gentleman, in his seal-skin cap and short green jacket, lounging along a field-side on his mare, Sibyl Grey, and pausing now and then to talk, with a serio-comic look, to a labouring man or woman, and rejoice them with some quaint saying in broad Scotch. The dinner hour was early; the sitting after dinner was hospitably but not immoderately prolonged; and the whole family party (for such it always seemed, even if there were several visiters) then met again for a short evening, which was passed in conversation and music. I once heard Sir Walter say, that he believed there was a 'pair' of cards (such was his antiquated expression)

* It is, however, the only sitting-room in the house that looks *southward*.

somewhere in the house—but probably there is no tradition of their having ever been used. The drawing-room and library (unfurnished at the time of my first visit) opened into each other, and formed a beautiful evening apartment. By every one who has visited at Abbotsford they must be associated with some of the most delightful recollections of his life. Sir Walter listened to the music of his daughters, which was all congenial to his own taste, with a never-failing enthusiasm. He followed the fine old songs which Mrs Lockhart sang to her harp with his mind, eyes, and lips, almost as if joining in an act of religion. To other musical performances he was a dutiful, and often a pleased listener, but I believe he cared little for mere music; the notes failed to charm him if they were not connected with good words, or immediately associated with some history or strong sentiment, upon which his imagination could fasten. A similar observation might, I should conceive, apply to his feeling of other arts. I do not remember any picture or print at Abbotsford which was remarkable merely as a work of colour or design. All, I think, either represented historical, romantic, or poetical subjects, or related to persons, places, or circumstances in which he took an interest. Even in architecture his taste had the same bias; almost every stone of his house bore an allusion or suggested a sentiment.

"It seemed at first a little strange, in a scène where so many things brought to mind the Waverley novels, to hear no direct mention of them or even allusion to their existence. But as forbearance on this head was a rule on which a complete tacit understanding subsisted, there was no embarrassment or appearance of mystery on the subject. Once or twice I have heard a casual reference made, in Sir Walter's presence, to some topic in the novels; no surprise or appearance of displeasure followed,

but the conversation, so far as it tended that way, died a natural death. It has, I believe, happened that he himself has been caught unawares on the forbidden ground; I have heard it told by a very acute observer, not now living, that on his coming once to Abbotsford, after the publication of the Pirate, Sir Walter asked him, 'Well, and how is our friend Kemble? glorious John!' and then, recollecting, of course, that he was talking Claude Halcro, he checked himself, and could not for some moments recover from the false step. Had a man been ever so prone to indiscretion on such subjects, it would have been unpardonable to betray it towards Sir Walter Scott, who (beside all his other claims to respect and affection) was himself cautious, even to nicety, of hazarding an enquiry or remark which might appear to be an intrusion upon the affairs of those with whom he conversed. It may be observed, too, that the publications of the day were by no means the staple of conversation at Abbotsford, though they had their turn; and with respect to his own works Sir Walter did not often talk even of those which were avowed. If he ever indulged in any thing like egotism, he loved better to speak of what he had done and seen than of what he had written.

"After all, there is perhaps hardly a secret in the world which has not its safety-valve. Though Sir Walter abstained strictly from any mention of the Waverley novels, he did not scruple to talk, and that with great zest, of the plays which had been founded upon some of them, and the characters, as there represented. Soon after our first meeting, he described to me, with his usual dramatic power, the deathbed scene of 'the original Dandie Dinmont;'* of course referring, ostensibly at least, to the *opera* of Guy Mannering. He dwelt with

* See Note to Guy Mannering, *Waverley Novels*, vol. iv., p. 242.

extreme delight upon Mackay's performances of the Bailie and Dominie Sampson, and appeared to taste them with all the fresh and disinterested enjoyment of a common spectator. I do not know a more interesting circumstance in the history of the Waverley novels than the pleasure which their illustrious author thus received, as it were at the rebound, from those creations of his own mind which had so largely increased the enjoyments of all the civilized world.

"In one instance only did he, in my presence, say or do any thing which seemed to have an intentional reference to the novels themselves, while they were yet unacknowledged. On the last day of my visit in 1823, I rode out with Sir Walter and his friend Mr Rose, who was then his guest and frequent companion in these short rambles. Sir Walter led us a little way down the left bank of the Tweed, and then into the moors by a track called the Girth Road, along which, he told us, the pilgrims from that side of the river used to come to Melrose. We traced upward, at a distance, the course of the little stream called the Elland, Sir Walter, as his habit was, pausing now and then to point out any thing in the prospect that was either remarkable in itself, or associated with any interesting recollection. I remember, in particular, his showing us, on a distant eminence, a dreary lone house, called the Hawk's Nest, in which a young man, returning from a fair with money, had been murdered in the night and buried under the floor, where his remains were found after the death or departure of the inmates; the fact was simple enough in itself, but, related in his manner, it was just such a story as should have been told by a poet on a lonely heath. When we had ridden a little time on the moors, he said to me rather pointedly, 'I am going to show you something that I think will interest you;' and presently, in a wild corner of the hills, he halted us at a place where

stood three small ancient towers, or castellated houses, in ruins, at short distances from each other. It was plain, upon the slightest consideration of the topography, that one (perhaps any one) of these was the tower of Glendearg, where so many romantic and marvellous adventures happen in The Monastery. While we looked at this forlorn group, I said to Sir Walter that they were what Burns called 'ghaist-alluring edifices.' 'Yes,' he answered, carelessly, 'I dare say there are many stories about them.' As we returned, by a different route, he made me dismount and take a footpath through a part of Lord Somerville's grounds, where the Ell-and runs through a beautiful little valley, the stream winding between level borders of the brightest green-sward, which narrow or widen as the steep sides of the glen advance or recede. The place is called the Fairy Dean, and it required no cicerone to tell that the glen was that in which Father Eustace, in The Monastery, is intercepted by the White Lady of Avenel."

Every friend of Sir Walter's must admire particularly Mr Adolphus's truly exquisite description of his laugh; but, indeed, every word of these memoranda is precious, and I shall by and by give the rest of them under the proper date.

In September, the Highland Society of Scotland, at the request of the late Sir Henry Stewart of Allanton, sent a deputation to his seat in Lanarkshire, to examine and report upon his famous improvements in the art of transplanting trees. Sir Walter was one of the committee appointed for this business, and he took a lively interest in it; as witness the Essay on Landscape Gardening,* which, whatever may be the fate of Sir Henry Stewart's own writings, will transmit his name to pos-

* *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xxi., pp. 77-151.

terity. Scott made several Allantonian experiments at Abbotsford; but found reason in the sequel to abate somewhat of the enthusiasm which his Essay expresses as to *the system*. The question, after all, comes to pounds, shillings, and pence—and, whether Sir Henry's accounts had or had not been accurately kept, the thing turned out greatly more expensive on Tweedside than he had found it represented in Clydesdale.

I accompanied Sir Walter on this little expedition, in the course of which we paid several other visits, and explored not a few ancient castles in the upper regions of the Tweed and the Clyde. Even while the weather was most unpropitious, nothing could induce him to remain in the carriage when we approached any ruined or celebrated edifice. If he had never seen it before, his curiosity was like that of an eager stripling;—if he had examined it fifty times, he must renew his familiarity, and gratify the tenderness of youthful reminiscences. While on the road his conversation never flagged—story suggested story, and ballad came upon ballad in endless succession. But what struck me most was the apparently omnivorous grasp of his memory. That he should recollect every stanza of any ancient ditty of chivalry or romance that had once excited his imagination, could no longer surprise me; but it seemed as if he remembered every thing without exception, so it were in any thing like the shape of verse, that he had ever read. For example, the morning after we left Allanton, we went across the country to breakfast with his friend Cranstoun (Lord Corehouse), who accompanied us in the same carriage; and his lordship happening to repeat a phrase, remarkable only for its absurdity, from a Magazine poem of the very silliest feebleness, which they had laughed at when at College together, Scott immediately began at the

beginning, and gave it us to the end, with apparently no more effort than if he himself had composed it the day before. I could after this easily believe a story often told by Hogg, to the effect that, lamenting in Scott's presence his having lost his only copy of a long ballad composed by him in his early days, and of which he then could recall merely the subject, and one or two fragments, Sir Walter forthwith said, with a smile, "Take your pencil, Jemmy, and I'll dictate your ballad to you, word for word;"—which was done accordingly.

As this was among the first times that I ever travelled for a few days in company with Scott, I may as well add the surprise with which his literary diligence, when away from home and his books, could not fail to be observed. Wherever we slept, whether in a noble mansion or in the shabbiest of country inns, and whether the work was done after retiring at night or before an early start in the morning, he *very rarely* mounted the carriage again without having a packet of the well-known aspect ready sealed, and corded, and addressed to his printer in Edinburgh. I used to suspect that he had adopted in his latter years the plan of writing every thing on paper of the quarto form, in place of the folio which he at an earlier period used, chiefly because in this way, whatever he was writing, and wherever he wrote, he might seem to casual observers to be merely engaged upon a common letter; and the rapidity of his execution, taken with the shape of his sheet, has probably deceived hundreds; but when he had finished his two or three letters, St Ronan's Well, or whatever was in hand, had made a chapter in advance.

The following was his first letter to Miss Edgeworth after her return to Ireland. Her youngest sister Sophia—(a beautiful creature—now gone, like most of the pleasant party then assembled)—had particularly pleased

him by her singing of a fragment of an Irish ditty, the heroine of which was a sad damsel in a *petticoat of red* —the chorus, I think, something like

> " *Shool, shool, ochone—ochone!*
> Thinking on the days that are long enough agone;"

and he had, as we shall see, been busying himself among his ballad collections, to see if he could recover any more of the words than the young lady had given him.

*To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworths'town.*

" Abbotsford, 22d Sept. 1823.

" My dear Miss Edgeworth,

" Miss Harriet had the goodness to give me an account of your safe arrival in the Green Isle, of which I was, sooth to say, extremely glad; for I had my own private apprehensions that your very disagreeable disorder might return while you were among strangers, and in our rugged climate. I now conclude you are settled quietly at home, and looking back on recollections of mountains, and valleys, and pipes, and clans, and cousins, and masons, and carpenters, and puppy-dogs, and all the confusion of Abbotsford, as one does on the recollections of a dream. We shall not easily forget the vision of having seen you and our two young friends, and your kind indulgence for all our humours, sober and fantastic, rough or smooth. Mamma writes to make her own acknowledgments for your very kind attention about the cobweb stockings, which reached us under the omnipotent frank of Croker, who, like a true Irish heart, never scruples stretching his powers a little to serve a friend.

" We are all here much as you left us, only in possession of our drawing-room, and glorious with our gas-lights, which as yet have only involved us once in total darkness—once in a temporary eclipse. In both cases the remedy was easy and the cause obvious; and if the

gas has no greater objections than I have yet seen or can anticipate, it is soon like to put wax and mutton-suet entirely out of fashion. I have recovered, by great accident, another verse or two of Miss Sophia's beautiful Irish air; it is only curious as hinting at the cause of the poor damsel of the red petticoat's deep dolour:—

'I went to the mill, but the miller was gone,
I sate me down and cried ochone,
To think on the days that are past and gone,
Of Dickie Macphalion that's slain.
Shool, shool, &c.

'I sold my rock, I sold my reel,
And sae hae I my spinning-wheel,
And all to buy a cap of steel,
For Dickie Macphalion that's slain.
Shool, shool,' &c. &c.

"But who was Dickie Macphalion for whom this lament was composed? Who was the Pharaoh for whom the Pyramid was raised? The questions are equally dubious and equally important, but as the one, we may reasonably suppose, was a King of Egypt, so I think we may guess the other to have been a Captain of Rapparees, since the ladies, God bless them, honour with the deepest of their lamentation gallants who live wildly, die bravely, and scorn to survive until they become old and not worth weeping for. So much for Dickie Macphalion, who, I dare say, was in his day "a proper young man." *

* "As clever Tom Clinch, while the rabble was bawling,
Rode stately through Holborn to die in his calling,
He stopt at the George for a bottle of sack,
And promised to pay for it when he came back.
His waistcoat, and stockings, and breeches were white;
His cap had a new cherry ribbon to tie't.
The maids to the doors and the balconies ran,
And said, 'Lack-a-day! he's a proper young man!'"
SWIFT.

"We have had Sir Humphrey Davy here for a day or two—very pleasant and instructive, and Will Rose for a month—that is, coming and going. Lockhart has been pleading at the circuit for a clansman of mine, who, having sustained an affront from two men on the road home from Earlstown fair, nobly waylaid and murdered them both single-handed. He also cut off their noses, which was carrying the matter rather too far, and so the jury thought—so my namesake must strap for it, as many of *The Rough Clan* have done before him. After this Lockhart and I went to Sir Henry Stewart's, to examine his process of transplanting trees. He exercises wonderful power certainly over the vegetable world, and has made his trees dance about as merrily as ever did Orpheus; but he has put me out of conceit with my profession of a landscape-gardener, now I see so few brains are necessary for a stock in trade. I wish Miss Harriet would dream no more ominous visions about Spicie.* The poor thing has been very ill of that fatal disorder proper to the canine race, called, *par excellence, the Distemper*. I have prescribed for her, as who should say thus you would doctor a dog, and I hope to bring her through, as she is a very affectionate little creature, and of a fine race. She has still an odd wheezing, however, which makes me rather doubtful of success. The Lockharts are both well, and at present our lodgers, together with John Hugh, or, as he calls himself, Donichue, which sounds like one of your old Irish kings. They all join in every thing kind and affectionate to you and the young ladies, and best compliments to your brother.

* *Spice*, one of the Pepper and Mustard terriers. Scott varied the names, unlike his Dandie Dinmont, but still, as he phrased it, "stuck to the cruets." At one time he had a *Pepper*, a *Mustard*, a *Spice*, a *Ginger*, a *Catchup*, and a *Soy*—all descendants of the real Charlie's-hope patriarchs.

—Believe me ever, dear Miss Edgeworth, yours, with the greatest truth and respect,

WALTER SCOTT."

The following letter was addressed to Joanna Baillie on the death of her brother, the celebrated physician:—

*To Miss Joanna Baillie.*

" Abbotsford, 3d October, 1823.

" My dearest Friend,

" Your very kind letter reached me just while I was deliberating how to address you on the painful, most painful subject, to which it refers, and considering how I could best intrude my own sympathy amidst your domestic affliction. The token you have given of your friendship, by thinking of me at such a moment, I will always regard as a most precious, though melancholy proof of its sincerity. We have, indeed, to mourn such a man, as, since medicine was first esteemed an useful and honoured science, has rarely occurred to grace its annals, and who will be lamented so long as any one lives, who has experienced the advantage of his professional skill, and the affectionate kindness by which it was accompanied. My neighbour and kinsman, John Scott of Gala, who was attended by our excellent friend during a very dangerous illness, is mingling his sorrow with mine, as one who laments almost a second father; and when in this remote corner there are two who join in such a sincere tribute to his memory, what must be the sorrows within his more immediate sphere of exertion! I do, indeed, sincerely pity the family and friends who have lost such a head, and that at the very time when they might, in the course of nature, have looked to enjoy his society for many years, and even more closely and intimately than during the preceding period

of his life, when his domestic intercourse was so much broken in upon by his professional duties. It is not for us, in this limited state of observation and comprehension, to enquire why the lives most useful to society, and most dear to friendship, seem to be of a shorter date than those which are useless, or perhaps worse than useless; — but the certainty that in another and succeeding state of things these apparent difficulties will be balanced and explained, is the best, if not the only cure for unavailing sorrow, and this your well-balanced and powerful mind knows better how to apply, than I how to teach the doctrine.

"We were made in some degree aware of the extremely precarious state of our late dear friend's health, by letters which young Surtees had from his friends in Gloucestershire, during a residence of a few weeks with us, and which mentioned the melancholy subject in a very hopeless manner, and with all the interest which it was calculated to excite. Poor dear Mrs Baillie is infinitely to be pitied, but you are a family of love; and though one breach has been made among you, will only extend your arms towards each other the more, to hide, though you cannot fill up the gap which has taken place. The same consolation remains for Mrs Agnes and yourself, my dear friend; and I have no doubt, that in the affection of Dr Baillie's family, and their success in life, you will find those pleasing ties which connect the passing generation with that which is rising to succeed it upon the stage.

"Sophia is in the way of enlarging her family—an event to which I look forward with a mixture of anxiety and hope. One baby, not very strong, though lively and clever, is a frail chance upon which to stake happiness; at the same time, God knows there have been too many instances of late of the original curse having

descended on young mothers with fatal emphasis; but we will hope the best. In the mean-time her spirits are good, and her health equally so. I know that even at this moment these details will not be disagreeable to you, so strangely are life and death, sorrow and pleasure, blended together in the tapestry of human life.

"I answer your letter before I have seen Sophia; but I know well how deeply she is interested in your grief. My wife and Anne send their kindest and most sympathetic regards. Walter is at the Royal Military College to study the higher branches of his profession, and Charles has returned to Wales.

"My affectionate respects attend Mrs Baillie and Mrs Agnes, and I ever am, my dear friend, respectfully and affectionately, yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

*To D. Terry, Esq., London.*

"Abbotsford, October 29, 1823.

"My dear Terry,

"Our correspondence has been flagging for some time, yet I have much to thank you for, and perhaps something to apologize for. We did not open Mr Baldock's commode, because, in honest truth, this place has cost me a great deal within these two years, and I was loth to add a superfluity, however elegant, to the heavy expense already necessarily incurred. Lady Scott, the party most interested in the drawing-room, thinks mirrors, when they cast up, better things and more necessary. We have received the drawing-room grate—very handsome indeed—from Bower, but not those for the library or my room, nor are they immediately wanted. Nothing have we heard of the best bed and its accompaniments, but there is no hurry for this neither. We are in possession of the bedroom story, garrets, and a part of the under

or sunk story—basement, the learned call it; but the library advances slowly. The extreme wetness of the season has prevented the floor from being laid, nor dare we now venture it till spring, when shifting and arranging the books will be 'a pleasing pain and toil with a gain.' The front of the house is now enclosed by a court-yard wall, with flankers of 100 feet, and a handsome gateway. The interior of the court is to be occupied by a large gravel drive for carriages, the rest with flowers, shrubs, and a few trees: the inside of the court-yard wall is adorned with large carved medallions from the old Cross of Edinburgh, and Roman or colonial heads in bas relief from the ancient station of Petreia, now called Old Penrith. A walk runs along it, which I intend to cover with creepers as a trellissed arbour: the court-yard is separated from the garden by a very handsome colonnade, the arches filled up with cast-iron, and the cornice carved with flowers, after the fashion of the running cornice on the cloisters at Melrose: the masons here cut so cheap that it really tempts one. All this is in a great measure finished, and by throwing the garden into a subordinate state, as a sort of *plaisance*, it has totally removed the awkward appearance of its being so near the house. On the contrary, it seems a natural and handsome accompaniment to the old-looking mansion. Some people of very considerable taste have been here, who have given our doings much applause, particularly Dr. Russel, a beautiful draughtsman, and no granter of propositions. The interior of the hall is finished with scutcheons, sixteen of which, running along the centre, I intend to paint with my own quarterings, so far as I know them, for I am as yet uncertain of two on my mother's side; but fourteen are no bad quartering to be quite real, and the others may be covered with a cloud, since I have no ambition to be

a canon of Strasburg, for which sixteen are necessary ;: I may light on these, however. The scutcheons on the cornice I propose to charge with the blazonry of all the Border clans, eighteen in number, and so many of the great families, not clans, as will occupy the others. The windows are to be painted with the different bearings of different families of the clan of Scott, which, with their quarterings and impalings, will make a pretty display. The arranging all these arms, &c., have filled up what Robinson Crusoe calls the rainy season, for such this last may on the whole be called. I shall be greatly obliged to you to let me know what debts I owe in London, that I may remit accordingly: best to pay for one's piping in time, and before we are familiar with our purchases. You mentioned having some theatrical works for me; do not fail to let me know the amount. Have you seen Dr Meyrick's account of the Ancient Armour? —it is a book beautifully got up, and of much antiquarian information.

"Having said so much for my house, I add for my family, that those who are here are quite well, but Lady Scott a little troubled with asthma. Ballantyne will send you my last affair now in progress: it is within, or may be easily compressed into, dramatic time; whether it is otherwise qualified for the stage, I cannot guess.—I am, my dear Terry, truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The novel to which Sir Walter thus alludes was published about the middle of December, and in its English reception there was another falling off, which of course somewhat dispirited the bookseller for the moment. Scotch readers in general dissented stoutly from this judgment, alleging (as they might well do), that Meg Dods deserved a place by the side of Monk-

barns, Bailie Jarvie, and Captain Dalgetty; that no one, who had lived in the author's own country, could hesitate to recognise vivid and happy portraitures in Touchwood, MacTurk, and the recluse minister of St Ronan's; that the descriptions of natural scenery might rank with any he had given;—and, finally, that the whole character of Clara Mowbray, but especially its developement in the third volume, formed an original creation, destined to be classed by posterity with the highest efforts of tragic romance. Some Edinburgh critics, however—(both talkers and writers)—received with considerable grudgings certain sarcastic sketches of the would-be-fine life of the watering-place—sketches which their Southron brethren had kindly suggested *might* be drawn from *Northern* observation, but could never appear better than fantastic caricatures to any person who had visited even a third-rate English resort of the same nominal class. There is no doubt that the author dashed off these minor personages with, in the painter's phrase, *a rich brush;* but I must confess my belief that they have far more truth about them than his countrymen seemed at the time willing to allow; and if any of my readers, whether Scotch or English, has ever happened to spend a few months, not in either an English or a Scotch watering-place of the present day, but among such miscellaneous assemblages of British nondescripts and outcasts, —including often persons of higher birth than any of the *beau monde* of St Ronan's Well,—as now infest many towns of France and Switzerland, he will, I am satisfied, be inclined to admit that, while the Continent was shut, as it was in the days of Sir Walter's youthful wanderings, a trip to such a sequestered place as Gilsland, or Moffat, or Innerleithen—(almost as inaccessible to London duns and bailiffs as the Isle of Man was then, or as Boulogne and Dieppe are

now)—may have supplied the future novelist's note-book with authentic materials even for such worthies as Sir Bingo and Lady Binks, Dr Quackleben, and Mr Winterblossom. It should, moreover, be borne in mind that, during our insular blockade, northern watering-places were not alone favoured by the resort of questionable characters from the south. The comparative cheapness of living, and especially of education, procured for Sir Walter's "own romantic town" a constant succession of such visitants, so long as they could have no access to the *tables d'hôte* and dancing-masters of the Continent. When I first mingled in the society of Edinburgh, it abounded with English, broken in character and in fortune, who found a mere title (even a baronet's one) of consequence enough to obtain for them, from the proverbially cautious Scotch, a degree of attention to which they had long been unaccustomed among those who had chanced to observe the progress of their personal histories; and I heard many name, when the novel was new, a booby of some rank, in whom they recognised a sufficiently accurate prototype for Sir Bingo.

Sir Walter had shown a remarkable degree of good-nature in the completion of this novel. When the end came in view, James Ballantyne suddenly took vast alarm about a particular feature in the history of the heroine. In the original conception, and in the book as actually written and printed, Miss Mowbray's mock marriage had not halted at the profaned ceremony of the church; and the delicate printer shrunk from the idea of obtruding on the fastidious public the possibility of any personal contamination having been incurred by a high-born damsel of the nineteenth century. Scott was at first inclined to dismiss his friend's scruples as briefly as he had done those of Blackwood in the case of the Black Dwarf:—"You would never have quar-

relled with it," he said, "had the thing happened to a girl in gingham. The silk petticoat can make little difference." James reclaimed with double energy, and called Constable to the rescue;—and after some pause, the author very reluctantly consented to cancel and rewrite about twenty-four pages, which was enough to obliterate, to a certain extent, the dreaded scandal—and in a similar degree, as he always persisted, to perplex and weaken the course of his narrative, and the dark effect of its catastrophe.

Whoever might take offence with different parts of the book, it was rapturously hailed by the inhabitants of Innerleithen, who immediately identified the most striking of its localities with those of their own pretty village and its picturesque neighbourhood, and foresaw in this celebration a chance of restoring the popularity of their long neglected *Well*—the same to which, as the reader of the first of these volumes may have noticed, Sir Walter Scott had occasionally escorted his mother and sister in the days of boyhood. The notables of the little town voted by acclamation that the old name of Innerleithen should be, as far as possible, dropped thenceforth, and that of St Ronan's adopted. Nor were they mistaken in their auguries. An unheard-of influx of water-bibbers forthwith crowned their hopes; and spruce *hottles* and huge staring lodging-houses soon arose to disturb wofully every association that had induced Sir Walter to make Innerleithen the scene of a romance. Nor were they who profited by these invasions of the *genius loci* at all sparing in their demonstrations of gratitude. The traveller reads on the corner of every new erection there, "Abbotsford Place," "Waverley Row," "The Marmion Hotel," or some inscription of the like coinage.

Among other consequences of the revived fame of the

place, a yearly festival was instituted for the celebration of "The St Ronan's Border Games." A club of "Bowmen of the Border," arrayed in doublets of Lincoln green, with broad blue bonnets, and having the Ettrick Shepherd for Captain, assumed the principal management of this exhibition; and Sir Walter was well pleased to be enrolled among them, and during several years was a regular attendant, both on the Meadow, where (besides archery) leaping, racing, wrestling, stone-heaving, and hammer-throwing, went on opposite to the noble old Castle of Traquair, and at the subsequent banquet, where Hogg, in full costume, always presided as master of the ceremonies. In fact, a gayer spectacle than that of the *St Ronan's Games*, in those days, could not well have been desired. The Shepherd, even when on the verge of threescore, exerted himself lustily in the field, and seldom failed to carry off some of the prizes, to the astonishment of his vanquished juniors; and the *bon-vivants* of Edinburgh mustered strong among the gentry and yeomanry of Tweeddale to see him afterwards in his glory, filling the president's chair with eminent success, and commonly supported on this—which was, in fact, the grandest evening of his year—by Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, Sir Adam Ferguson, and "Peter Robertson."

In Edinburgh, at least, the play founded, after the usual fashion, on St Ronan's Well, had success very far beyond the expectations of the novelist, whatever may have been those of the dramatizer. After witnessing the first representation, Scott wrote thus to Terry —"We had a new piece t'other night from St Ronan's, which, though I should have supposed it ill adapted for the stage, succeeded wonderfully—chiefly by Murray's acting of the Old Nabob. Mackay also made an excellent Meg Dods, and kept his gestures and his action

more within the verge of female decorum than I thought possible."

A broad piece of drollery, in the shape of an epilogue, delivered in character by Mackay when he first took a benefit as Meg Dods, is included in the last edition of Scott's Poetical Works;* but though it caused great merriment at the time in Edinburgh, the allusions are so exclusively local and temporary, that I fear no commentary could ever make it intelligible elsewhere.

* See edition 1834, vol. xi. p. 369.

## CHAPTER XII.

PUBLICATION OF REDGAUNTLET—DEATH OF LORD BYRON—LIBRARY AND MUSEUM—"THE WALLACE CHAIR"—HOUSE-PAINTING, ETC.—ANECDOTES—LETTERS TO CONSTABLE—MISS EDGEWORTH—TERRY—MISS BAILLIE—LORD MONTAGU—MR SOUTHEY—CHARLES SCOTT, ETC.—SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE EDINBURGH ACADEMY—DEATH AND EPITAPH OF MAIDA—FIRES IN EDINBURGH—

1824.

IMMEDIATELY on the conclusion of St Ronan's Well, Sir Walter began the novel of *Redgauntlet*;—but it had made considerable progress at press before Constable and Ballantyne could persuade him to substitute that title for *Herries*. The book was published in June 1824, and was received at the time somewhat coldly, though it has since, I believe, found more justice. The re-introduction of the adventurous hero of 1745, in the dulness and dimness of advancing age, and fortunes hopelessly blighted—and the presenting him—with whose romantic portraiture at an earlier period historical truth had been so admirably blended—as the moving principle of events, not only entirely, but notoriously imaginary—this was a rash experiment, and could not fail to suggest many disagreeable and disadvantageous comparisons; yet, had there been no Waverley, I am persuaded the fallen and faded Ascanius of Redgauntlet would have been universally pronounced a masterpiece. About the secondary personages there could be little ground for controversy. What novel or drama has surpassed the

grotesquely ludicrous, dashed with the profound pathos, of Peter Peebles—the most tragic of farces?—or the still sadder merriment of that human shipwreck, Nantie Ewart?—or Wandering Willie and his Tale?—the wildest and most rueful of dreams told by such a person, and in such a dialect! Of the young correspondents Darsie Latimer and Allan Fairford, and the Quakers of Mount Sharon, and indeed of numberless minor features in Redgauntlet, no one who has read the first volume of these memoirs will expect me to speak at length here. With posterity assuredly this novel will yield in interest to none of the series—for it contains perhaps more of the author's personal experiences than any other of them, or even than all the rest put together.

This year, *mirabile dictu!* produced but one novel; and it is not impossible that the author had taken deeply into his mind, though he would not *immediately* act upon them, certain hints about the danger of "overcropping," which have been alluded to as dropping from his publishers in 1823. He had, however, a labour of some weight to go through in preparing for the press a Second Edition of his voluminous Swift. The additions to this reprint were numerous, and he corrected his notes, and the Life of the Dean throughout, with considerable care. He also threw off several reviews and other petty miscellanies—among which last occurs his memorable tribute to the memory of Lord Byron, written for Ballantyne's newspaper immediately after the news of the catastrophe at Missolonghi reached Abbotsford.*

The arrangement of his library and museum was, however, the main care of the summer months of this year; and his woods were now in such a state of progress that his most usual exercise out of doors was thinning

* See Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iv. p. 343.

them. He was an expert as well as powerful wielder of the axe, and competed with his ablest subalterns as to the paucity of blows by which a tree could be brought down. The wood rang ever and anon with laughter while he shared their labours; and if he had taken, as he every now and then did, a whole day with them, they were sure to be invited home to Abbotsford to sup gaily at Tom Purdie's. One of Sir Walter's Transatlantic admirers, by the way, sent him a complete assortment of the tools employed in clearing the Backwoods, and both he and Tom made strenuous efforts to attain some dexterity in using them; but neither succeeded. The American axe, in particular, having a longer shaft than ours, and a much smaller and narrower cutting-piece, was, in Tom's opinion, only fit for paring a *kebbuck* (*i. e.* a cheese of skimmed milk). The old-fashioned large and broad axe was soon resumed; and the belt that bore it had accommodation also for a chissel, a hammer, and a small saw. Among all the numberless portraits, why was there not one representing the "Belted Knight," accoutred with these appurtenances of his forest-craft, jogging over the heather on a breezy morning, with Thomas Purdie at his stirrup, and Maida stalking in advance?

Notwithstanding the numberless letters to Terry about his upholstery, the far greater part of it was manufactured at home. The most of the articles from London were only models for the use of two or three neat-handed carpenters whom he had discovered in the villages near him: and he watched and directed their operations as carefully as a George Bullock could have done, and the results were such as even Bullock might have admired. The great table in the library, for example (a most complex and beautiful one), was done

entirely in the room where it now stands, by Joseph Shillinglaw of Darnick—the Sheriff planning and studying every turn as zealously as ever an old lady pondered the developement of an embroidered cushion. The hangings and curtains, too, were chiefly the work of a little hunchbacked tailor, by name *William* Goodfellow—(save at Abbotsford, where he answered to *Robin*)—who occupied a cottage on Scott's farm of the Broomielees—one of the race that creep from homestead to homestead, welcomed wherever they appear by housewife and handmaiden, the great gossips and newsmen of the parish,—in Scottish nomenclature *cardooers*. Proudly and earnestly did all these vassals toil in his service; and I think it was one of them that, when some stranger asked a question about his personal demeanour, answered in these simple words—"Sir Walter speaks to every man as if they were blood-relations." Not long after he had completed his work at Abbotsford, little Goodfellow fell sick, and as his cabin was near Chiefswood, I had many opportunities of observing the Sheriff's kind attention to him in his affliction. I can never forget, in particular, the evening on which the poor tailor died. When Scott entered the hovel he found every thing silent, and inferred from the looks of the good women in attendance that their patient had fallen asleep, and that they feared his sleep was the final one. He murmured some syllables of kind regret;—at the sound of his voice the dying tailor unclosed his eyes, and eagerly and wistfully sat up, clasping his hands with an expression of rapturous gratefulness and devotion, that, in the midst of deformity, disease, pain, and wretchedness, was at once beautiful and sublime. He cried with a loud voice "the Lord bless and reward you," and expired with the effort.

In the painting of his interior, too, Sir Walter personally directed every thing. He abominated the commonplace daubing of walls, panels, doors, and window-boards with coats of white, blue, or grey, and thought that sparklings and edgings of gilding only made their baldness and poverty more noticeable. He desired to have about him, wherever he could manage it, rich, though not gaudy, hangings, or substantial, old-fashioned wainscot-work, with no ornament but that of carving; and where the wood was to be painted at all, it was done in strict imitation of oak or cedar. Except in the drawing-room, which he abandoned to Lady Scott's taste, all the roofs were in appearance of antique carved oak, relieved by coats of arms duly blazoned at the intersections of beams, and resting on cornices, to the eye of the same material, but really composed of casts in plaster of Paris after the foliage, the flowers, the grotesque monsters and dwarfs, and sometimes the beautiful heads of nuns and confessors, on which he had doated from infancy among the cloisters of Melrose and Roslin. In the painting of these things, also, he had instruments who considered it as a labour of love. The master-limner, in particular, had a devoted attachment to his person; and this was not wonderful, for he, in fact, owed a prosperous fortune to Scott's kind and sagacious counsel, tendered at the very outset of his career. A printer's apprentice attracted notice by his attempts with the pencil, and Sir Walter was called upon, after often admiring his skill in representing dogs and horses and the like, to assist him with his advice, as ambition had been stirred, and the youth would fain give himself to the regular training of an artist. Scott took him into his room, and conversed with him at some length. He explained

the difficulties and perils, the almost certain distresses, the few and narrow chances of this aspiring walk. He described the hundreds of ardent spirits that pine out their lives in solitary garrets, lamenting over the rash eagerness with which they had obeyed the suggestions of young ambition, and chosen a career in which success of any sort is rare, and no success but the highest is worth attaining. "You have talents and energy," said he, "but who can say whether you have genius? These boyish drawings can never be relied on as proofs of *that*. If you feel within you such a glow of ambition, that you would rather run a hundred chances of obscurity and penury than miss *one* of being a Wilkie,—make up your mind, and take the bold plunge; but if your object is merely to raise yourself to a station of worldly comfort and independence,—if you would fain look forward with tolerable assurance to the prospect of being a respectable citizen, with your own snug roof over your head, and the happy faces of a wife and children about you,—pause and reflect well. It appears to me that there is little demand for fine works of the pencil in this country. Not a few artists, who have even obtained high and merited reputation, find employment scarce, and starve under their laurels. I think profit in Britain is, with very rare exceptions, annexed to departments of obvious and direct utility, in which the mass of the people are concerned; and it has often struck me, that some clever fellow might make a good hit if, in place of enrolling himself among the future Raphaels and Vandykes of the Royal Academy, he should resolutely set himself to introducing something of a more elegant style of house-painting." The young man thus addressed (Mr D. R. Hay) was modest and wise enough to accept the advice with thankfulness,

and to act upon it with patience and steadiness. After a few years he had qualified himself to take charge of all this delicate limning and blazoning at Abbotsford. He is now, I understand, at the head of a great and flourishing establishment in Edinburgh; and a treatise on the science of colour, which has proceeded from his pen, is talked of as reflecting high credit on his taste and understanding. Nor should I omit what seems a particularly honourable trait in Mr Hay:—he is said to be one of the most liberal patrons of native art now in existence; in fact, to possess an unrivalled collection of the works of contemporary Scottish painters.

Mean-time the progress of Abbotsford stimulated largely both friends and strangers to contribute articles of curiosity towards its final adornment. I have already alluded with regret to the non-completion of the Poet's own catalogue of his literary and antiquarian rarities, begun under the title of "Reliquiæ Trottcosianæ," and mentioned Mr Train, the affectionate supervisor of excise, as the most unwearied and bountiful of all the contributors to the *Museum*. Now, he would fain have his part in the substantial "*plenishing*" also; and I transcribe, as a specimen of his zeal, the account which I have received from himself of the preparation and transmission of one piece of furniture, to which his friend allotted a distinguished place, for it was one of the *two* chairs that ultimately stood in his own *sanctum sanctorum*. In those days Mr Train's official residence was at Kirkintilloch, in Stirlingshire; and he says, in his *Memoranda*,—

"Rarbiston, or, as it is now called, Robroyston, where the valiant Wallace was betrayed by Monteith of Ruskie, is only a few miles distant from Kirkintilloch. The walls of the house where the first scene of

that disgraceful tragedy was acted were standing, on my arrival in that quarter. The roof was entirely gone; but I observed that some butts of the rafters, built into the wall, were still remaining. As the ruin was about being taken down to make way for the ploughshare, I easily succeeded in purchasing these old stumps from the farmer upon whose ground it stood. When taken out of the building, these pieces of wood were seemingly so much decayed as to be fit only for fuel; but after planing off about an inch from the surface, I found that the remainder of the wood was as hard as a bone, and susceptible of a fine polish. I then resolved upon having a chair of the most antique description made out of these wasted blocks as a memorial of our most patriotic hero, with a feeling somewhat similar to theirs who remember their Saviour in the crucifix.

"In the execution of this undertaking workmen of various denominations were employed. It was modelled from an old chair in the Palace of Hamilton, and is nearly covered with carved work, representing rocks, heather, and thistles, emblematic of Scotland, and indented with brass, representing the *Harp of the North*, surrounded with laurels, and supported by targets, claymores, Lochaber axes, war horns, &c. The seat is covered with silk velvet, beneath which is a drawer, containing a book bound in the most primitive form in Robroyston Wood, with large clasps. In this book are detailed at length some of the particulars here briefly alluded to, with the affirmations of several persons to whose care the chair was entrusted in the course of making.

"On the (inside) back of the chair is a brass plate, bearing the following inscription:—

"THIS CHAIR,
MADE OF THE ONLY REMAINING WOOD
OF THE
HOUSE AT ROBROYSTON,
IN WHICH THE
MATCHLESS SIR WILLIAM WALLACE
'WAS DONE TO DEATH BY FELON HAND
FOR GUARDING WELL HIS FATHERS' LAND,'
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY PRESENTED TO
SIR WALTER SCOTT,
AS A SMALL TOKEN OF GRATITUDE,
BY HIS DEVOTED SERVANT,
JOSEPH TRAIN.

"Exaggerated reports of this chair spread over the adjacent country with a fiery-cross-like speed, and raised public curiosity to such a height, that persons in their own carriages came many miles to see it. I happened to be in a distant part of my district at the time; but I dare say many persons in Kirkintilloch yet remember how triumphantly the symbolic chair was borne from my lodgings to the bank of the Great Canal, to be there shipped for Abbotsford, in the midst of the town-band playing—'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' and surrounded by thousands, who made the welkin resound with bursts of national enthusiasm, justifying the couplet of Pope—

> 'All this may be, the people's voice is odd;
> The Scots will fight for Wallace as for God.'"—

Such arrivals as that of "the Wallace Chair" were frequent throughout 1824. It was a happy, and therefore it need hardly be added an eventful year—his last year of undisturbed prosperity. The little incidents that diversified his domestic interior, and the zeal which he always kept up for all the concerns of his friends, together with a few indications of his opinions on subjects of liter-

ary and political interest, will be found in his correspondence, which will hardly require any editorial explanations.

Within, I think, the same week in January, arrived a copy of Montfaucon's Antiquities, in fifteen volumes folio, richly bound in scarlet, the gift of King George IV., and a set of the Variorum Classics, in about a hundred volumes octavo, from Mr Constable. Sir Walter says—

*To Archibald Constable, Esq.*

"Abbotsford, 6th January, 1824.

"My dear Sir,

"Yesterday I had the great pleasure of placing in my provisional library the most splendid present, as I in sincerity believe, which ever an author received from a bookseller. In the shape of these inimitable *Variorums*, who knows what new ideas the Classics may suggest?—for I am determined to shake off the rust which years have contracted, and to read at least some of the most capital of the ancients before I die. Believe me, my dear and old friend, I set a more especial value on this work as coming from you, and as being a pledge that the long and confidential intercourse betwixt us has been agreeable and advantageous to both.—Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Miss Edgeworth had written to him to enquire about the health of his eldest daughter, and told him some anecdotes of an American dame, whose head had been turned by the Waverley Novels, and who had, among other demonstrations of enthusiasm, called her farm in Massachussetts, *Charlie's Hope.* This lady had, it seems, corresponded with Mrs Grant of Laggan, herself for a time one of the "Authors of Waverley," and Mrs Grant, in disclaiming such honours, had spoken of the real

source in terms of such perfect assurance, that the honest American almost fancied she must have heard Scott confess; yet still she was in doubts and tribulations, and unhappy till she could hear more. The theory prevalent in her own neighbourhood was, it seems, that the authorship was a joint-stock business—Sir Walter being one of the partners, and the other an unfortunate lunatic, of whose papers he had got possession during a lucid interval. Scott answers thus:—

*To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworths'town, Ireland.*

"Parliament House, 3d Feb., 1824.

"My dear Miss Edgeworth,

"I answer your kind letter immediately, because I am sure your sisters and you will interest yourselves in Sophia's state of health. My news are not of the best—

'Yet not so ill, but may be well reported.'

On Saturday, 31st January, she had a daughter, but the poor little stranger left us on the Monday following; and though Sophia is very patient in her temper, yet her recovery is naturally retarded, and I am sorry to say she has been attacked in her weak state by those spasms which seem a hereditary disorder in my family,—slightly, however, in comparison of the former occasion; and for the last two days she has been so much recovered as to take a grain or two of calomel, which is specific in the complaint. I have no doubt now, humanly speaking, that her recovery will proceed favourably. I saw her for a quarter of an hour yesterday, which was the first *permanent* visit I have been permitted to make her. So you may conceive we have been anxious enough, living, as is our clannish fashion, very much for, and with each other.

"Your American friend, the good-wife of Charlie's

Hope, seems disposed, as we say, 'to sin her mercies.' She quarrels with books that amuse her, because she does not know the author; and she gives up chicken-pie for the opposite reason, that she knows too much about the birds' pedigree. On the last point I share her prejudices, and never could eat the flesh of any creature I had known while alive. I had once a noble yoke of oxen, which, with the usual agricultural gratitude, we killed for the table; they said it was the finest beef in the four counties, but I could never taste Gog and Magog, whom I used to admire in the plough. Moreover, when I was an officer of yeomanry, and used to dress my own charger, I formed an acquaintance with a flock of white turkeys, by throwing them a handful of oats now and then when I came from the stable:—I saw their numbers diminish with real pain, and never attempted to eat any of them without being sick. And yet I have as much of the *rugged and tough* about me as is necessary to carry me through all sorts of duty without much sentimental compunction.

"As to the ingenious system of double authorship, which the Americans have devised for the Waverley novels, I think it in one point of view extremely likely; since the unhappy man, whom they have thought fit to bring on the carpet, has been shut up in a mad-house for many years; and it seems probable that no brain but a madman's could have invented so much stuff, and no leisure but that of a prisoner could have afforded time to write it all. But, if this poor man be the author of these works, I can assure your kind friend that I neither could, would, nor durst have the slightest communication with him on that or any other subject. In fact, I have never heard of him twice for these twenty years or more. As for honest Mrs Grant, I cannot conceive why the deuce I should have selected her for a mother-confessor; if it had been yourself or

Joanna, there might have been some probability in the report; but good Mrs Grant is so very cerulean, and surrounded by so many fetch-and-carry mistresses and missesses, and the maintainer of such an unmerciful correspondence, that though I would do her any kindness in my power, yet I should be afraid to be very intimate with a woman whose tongue and pen are rather overpowering. She is an excellent person notwithstanding. Pray, make my respects to your correspondent, and tell her I am very sorry I cannot tell her who the author of Waverley is; but I hope she will do me the justice not to ascribe any dishonourable transactions to me, either in that matter or any other, until she hears that they are likely to correspond with any part of my known character—which, having been now a lion of good reputation on my own deserts for twenty years and upwards, ought to be indifferently well known in Scotland. She seems to be a very amiable person; and though I shall never see Charlie's Hope, or eat her chicken-pies, I am sure I wish health to wait on the one, and good digestion on the other. They are funny people the Americans; I saw a paper in which they said my father was a tailor. If he had been an *honest tailor* I should not have been ashamed of the circumstance; but he was what may be thought as great a phenomenon, for he was an *honest lawyer*, a cadet of a good family, whose predecessors only dealt in pinking and slashing doublets, not in making them.

"Here is a long letter, and all about trash, but what can you expect? Judges are mumbling and grumbling above me—lawyers are squabbling and babbling around me. The minutes I give to my letter are stolen from Themis. I hope to get to Abbotsford very soon, though only for two or three days, until 12th March, when we go there for some time. Mrs Spicie

seems to be recovering from her asthmatics, which makes a curious case, providing the recovery be completed. Walter came down at Christmas, and speedily assembled three more terriers. One day the whole got off after a hare, and made me remember the basket beagles that Lord Morton used to keep in my youth; for the whole pack opened like hounds, and would have stuck to the chase till they had killed the hare, which would have been like being pricked to death with pins, if we had not licked them off so soon as we could for laughing. This is a dull joke on paper; but imagine the presumption of so many long-backed, short-legged creatures pursuing an animal so very fleet. You will allow it is something ridiculous. I am sure Count O'Halloran would have laughed, and Colonel Heathcock would have been scandalized.* Lady S. sends her best and kindest remembrances, in which she is joined by Anne and Sophia (poor body). My fair friends, Harriet and Sophia, have a large interest in this greeting, and Lockhart throws himself in with tidings that Sophia continues to mend.—Always, my dear Miss E., most faithfully yours, WALTER SCOTT."

This is the answer to a request concerning some MS. tragedy, by the late Mrs Hemans, which seems to have been damned at one of the London theatres, and then to have been tried over again (I know not with what result) at Edinburgh:—

*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

"Edinburgh, February 9, 1824.

"My dear Miss Baillie,

"To hear is to obey, and the enclosed line will show that the Siddonses are *agreeable* to act Mrs Hemans's

* See "The Absentee," in Miss Edgeworth's Tales of Fashionable Life.

drama. When you tell the tale say nothing about me, for on no earthly consideration would I like it to be known that I interfered in theatrical matters; it brings such a torrent of applications which it is impossible to grant, and often very painful to refuse. Every body thinks they can write blank verse—and *a word of yours to Mrs Siddons*, &c. &c. I had one rogue (to be sure he went mad afterwards, poor fellow) who came to bully me in my own house, until he had almost made the mist of twenty years, as Ossian says, roll backwards from my spirit, in which case he might have come by an excellent good beating. I have great pleasure, however, in serving Mrs Hemans, both on account of her own merit, and because of your patronage. I trust the piece will succeed; but there is no promising, for Saunders is meanly jealous of being thought less critical than John Bull, and may, perhaps, despise to be pleased with what was less fortunate in London. I wish Mrs H. had been on the spot to make any alterations, &c. which the players are always demanding. I will read the drama over more carefully than I have yet done, and tell you if any thing occurs. I need hardly apologize for being late in letting you hear all this—for the terror of the cramp attacking poor Sophia in her weak state kept us very feverish; but thank God it did little more than menace her, and the symptoms having now given way, her husband talks of going to town, in which case I intend to take Sophia to Abbotsford, and

> 'Till she be fat as a Norroway seal,
> I'll feed her on bannocks of barleymeal.'

"Betwixt indolence of her own, and Lockhart's extreme anxiety and indulgence, she has foregone the custom of her exercise, to which, please God, we will bring her back by degrees. Little Charles is come down,

just entered at Brazen Nose, where, however, he does not go to reside till October. We must see that he fills up the space between to good advantage; he had always quickness enough to learn, and seems now really to have caught the

——'fever of renown,
Sprung from the strong contagion of the gown.'

"I am sorry for Mr Crabbe's complaint, under which he suffered, I recollect, when he was here in 1822. Did you ever make out how he liked his Scottish tour?—he is not, you know, very *outspoken*, and I was often afraid that he was a little tired by the bustle around him. At another time I would have made a point of attending more to his comforts—but what was to be done amid piping, and drumming, and pageants, and provosts, and bailies, and wild Highlandmen by the score? The time would have been more propitious to a younger poet. The fertility you mention is wonderful, but surely he must correct a great deal to bring his verses into the terse and pointed state in which he gives them to the public. To come back to Mrs Hemans. I am afraid that I cannot flatter myself with much interest that can avail her. I go so little out, and mix so seldom either with the gay or the literary world here, that I am reduced, like Gil Blas, much to the company of my brother clerks and men of business, a seclusion which I cannot say I regret greatly; but any thing within my power shall not be left undone. I hope you will make my apology to Mrs Hemans for the delay which has taken place; if any thing should occur essential to be known to the authoress, I will write immediately.

"Always yours, my dear friend,
WALTER SCOTT."

In the next letter Scott mentions an application from

Mr James Montgomery for some contribution to a miscellaneous volume compiled by that ever benevolent poet for the benefit of the little chimney-sweeps.

*To Miss Baillie, Hampstead.*

"Edinburgh, Feb. 12, 1824.

"My dearest Friend,

"I hasten to answer your kind enquiries about Sophia. You would learn from my last that she was in a fair way of recovery, and I am happy to say she continues so well that we have no longer any apprehensions on her account. She will soon get into her sitting-room again, and of course have good rest at night, and gather strength gradually. I have been telling her that her face, which was last week the size of a sixpence, has, in three or four days attained the diameter of a shilling, and will soon attain its natural and most extensive circumference of half-a-crown. If we live till 12th of next month we shall all go to Abbotsford, and between the black doctor and the red nurse (pony and cow, videlicet) I trust she will be soon well again. As for little Johnnie I have no serious apprehensions, being quite of your mind that his knowingness is only a proof that he is much with grown-up people; the child is active enough, and I hope will do well—yet an only child is like a blot at backgammon, and fate is apt to hit it. I am particularly entertained with your answer to Montgomery, because it happened to be precisely the same with mine; he applied to me for a sonnet or an elegy, instead of which I sent him an account of a manner of constructing chimneys so as scarcely to contract soot; and 2dly, of a very simple and effectual machine for sweeping away what soot does adhere. In all the new part of Abbotsford I have lined the chimney-vents with a succession of cones made of the same stuff with common flower-pots,

about one and a half inch thick, and eighteen inches or two feet high, placed one above another, and the vent built round them, so that the smoke passing up these round earthen tubes, finds neither corner nor roughness on which to deposit the soot, and in fact there is very little collected. What sweeping is required is most easily performed by a brush like what housemaids call a *pope's head*, the handle of which consists of a succession of pipes, one slipping on the top of another like the joints of a fishing-rod, so that the maid first sweeps the lower part of the vent, then adds another pipe and sweeps a little higher, and so on. I have found this quite effectual, but the lining of the chimneys makes the accumulations of soot very trifling in comparison with the common case. Montgomery thanked me, but I think he would rather have had a sonnet; which puts me in mind of Mr Puff's intended comedy of The Reformed Housebreaker, in which he was to put burglary in so ridiculous a point of view, that bolts and bars were likely to become useless by the end of the season. Verily I have no idea of writing verse on a grave subject of utility, any more than of going to church in a cinque pace. Lottery tickets and Japan blacking may indeed be exceptions to the general rule. I am quite delighted at us two cool Scots answering in exactly the same manner, but I am afraid your *sooty men* (who are still in regular discharge of their duty) and my *pope's head* and lined vents will not suit the committee, who seem more anxious for poetry than for common sense. For my part, when I write on such subjects, I intend it shall be a grand historico-philosophico poem upon oil-gas, having been made president of the Oil-gas Company of this city; the whale fishery might be introduced, and something pretty said about *palm* oil, which we think is apt to be popular among our lawyers. I am very sorry for poor Richardson, so much

attached to his wife, and suffering so much in her suffering. I hope Tom Campbell gets on pretty well, and wish he would do something to sustain his deserved reputation. I wrote with Mrs Siddons's consent to give Mrs Hemans's tragedy a trial. I hope that her expectations are not very high, for I do not think our ordinary theatrical audience is either more judicious or less fastidious than those of England. They care little about poetry on the stage—it is situation, passion, and rapidity of action which seem to be the principal requisites for ensuring the success of a modern drama; but I trust, by dint of a special jury, the piece may have a decent success—certainly I should not hope for much more. I must see they bring it out before 12th March, if possible, as we go to the country that day. I have not seen Mrs Siddons and her brother William Murray since their obliging answer, for one of my colleagues is laid up with gout, and this gives me long seats in the Court, of which you have reaped the fruits in this long epistle from the Clerk's table, done amid the bustle of pleaders, attorneys, and so forth. I will get a frank, however, if possible, for the matter is assuredly not worth a shilling postage. My kindest remembrances attend Mrs Baillie and Mrs Agnes.—Always yours, with sincere respect and affection,

WALTER SCOTT."

*To D. Terry, Esq., London.*

"Abbotsford, Feb. 18, 1824.

"My dear Terry,

"Your very kind letter reached me here, so that I was enabled to send you immediately an accurate sketch of the windows and chimney-sides of the drawing-room to measurement. I should like the mirrors handsome and the frames plain; the colour of the hangings is green, with rich Chinese figures. On the side of the window

I intend to have exactly beneath the glass a plain white side-table of the purest marble, on which to place Chantrey's bust. A truncated pillar of the same marble will be its support; and I think that besides the mirror above there will be a plate of mirror below the table; these memoranda will enable Baldock to say at what price these points can be handsomely accomplished. I have not yet spoken about the marble table; perhaps they may be all got in London. I shall be willing to give a handsome but not an extravagant price. I am much obliged to Mr Baldock for his confidence about the screen. But what says Poor Richard?* 'Those who want money when they come to buy, are apt to want money when they come to pay.' Again Poor Dick observes,

> 'That in many you find the true gentleman's fate,
> Ere his house is complete he has sold his estate.'

So we will adjourn consideration of the screen till other times; let us first have the needful got and paid for. The stuff for the windows in the drawing-room is the crimson damask silk we bought last year. I enclose a scrap of it that the fringe may be made to match. I propose they should be hung with large handsome brass rings upon a brass cylinder, and I believe it would be best to have these articles from London—I mean the rings and cylinders; but I dislike much complication in the mode of drawing them separate, as it is eternally going wrong; those which divide in the middle, drawing back on each side like the curtains of an old-fashioned bed, and when drawn back are secured by a loop and tassel are, I think, the handsomest, and can easily be made on the spot; the fringe should be silk, of course. I think the curtains of the library, considering the purpose of the

* See the works of Dr Franklin.

room, require no fringe at all. We have, I believe, settled that they shall not be drawn in a line across the recess, as in the drawing-room, but shall circle along the inside of the windows. I refer myself to Mr Atkinson about the fringe, but I think a little mixture of gold would look handsome with the crimson silk. As for the library a yellow fringe, if any. I send a draught of the windows enclosed; the architraves are not yet up in the library, but they are accurately computed from the drawings of my kind friend Mr Atkinson. There is plenty of time to think about these matters, for of course the rooms must be painted before they are put up. I saw the presses yesterday; they are very handsome, and remind me of the awful job of arranging my books. About July Abbotsford will, I think, be finished, when I shall, like the old Duke of Queensberry who built Drumlanrig, fold up the accounts in a sealed parcel, with a label bidding 'the deil pike out the een of any of my successors that shall open it.' I beg kind love to Mrs Terry, Walter the Great, and Missy; delicious weather here, and birds singing St Valentine's matins as if it were April.—Yours ever,

WALTER SCOTT."

"P.S.—Pride will have a fall—I have a whelp of one of Dandie Dinmont's Pepper and Mustard terriers, which no sooner began to follow me into the house than Ourisque fell foul. The Liddisdale devil cocked its nose, and went up to the scratch like a tigress, downed Ourie, and served her out completely—since which Ourie has been so low that it seems going into an atrophy, and Ginger takes all manner of precedence, as the best place by the fire, and so on, to Lady Scott's great discomfiture.—Single letters by post: double to Croker with a card enclosed, asking a frank to me."

About this time Miss Edgeworth announced the approaching marriage of her sister Sophia to Mr Fox.

*To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown.*

"Edinburgh, February 24, 1824.

"My dear Miss Edgeworth,

"I do not delay a moment to send my warmest and best congratulations upon the very happy event which is about to take place in your family, and to assure that you do me but common justice in supposing that I take the warmest interest in whatever concerns my young friend. All Abbotsford to an acre of Poyais* that she will make an excellent wife; and most truly happy am I to think that she has such an admirable prospect of matrimonial happiness, although at the expense of thwarting the maxim, and showing that

'The course of true love *sometimes may* run smooth.'

It will make a pretty vista, as I hope and trust, for you, my good friend, to look forwards with an increase of interest to futurity. Lady Scott, Ann, and Sophia send their sincere and hearty congratulations upon this joyful occasion. I hope to hear her sing the petticoat of red some day in her own house. I should be apt to pity you a little amid all your happiness, if you had not my friend Miss Harriet, besides other young companions whose merits are only known to me by report, to prevent your feeling so much as you would otherwise the blank which this event must occasion in your domestic society. Sophia, I hope, will be soon able to make her own gratulations; she is recovering very well, and overjoyed to hear such good news from your quar-

* One of the bubbles of this bubble period, was a scheme of colonization at Poyais.

ter. I have been on a short trip to Abbotsford, to set painters to work to complete what Slender would call, 'Mine own great chamber;' and on my return I was quite delighted to see the change on my daughter. Little John Hugh is likewise much better, but will require nursing and care for some years at least. Yet I have often known such hothouse plants bear the open air as well as those that were reared on the open moor.

"I am not at all surprised at what you say of the Yankees. They are a people possessed of very considerable energy, quickened and brought into eager action by an honourable love of their country and pride in their institutions; but they are as yet rude in their ideas of social intercourse, and totally ignorant, speaking generally, of all the art of good-breeding, which consists chiefly in a postponement of one's own petty wishes or comforts to those of others. By rude questions and observations, an absolute disrespect to other people's feelings, and a ready indulgence of their own, they make one feverish in their company, though perhaps you may be ashamed to confess the reason. But this will wear off, and is already wearing away. Men, when they have once got benches, will soon fall into the use of cushions. They are advancing in the lists of our literature, and they will not be long deficient in the *petite morale*, especially as they have, like ourselves, the rage for travelling. I have seen a new work, the Pilot, by the author of the Spy and Pioneer. The hero is the celebrated Paul Jones, whom I well remember advancing above the island of Inchkeith with three small vessels to lay Leith under contribution. I remember my mother being alarmed with the drum, which she had heard all her life at eight o'clock, conceiving it to be the pirates who had landed. I never saw such a change as betwixt that time, 1779, in the military state of a city. Then Edin-

burgh had scarce three companies of men under arms; and latterly she furnished 5000, with complete appointments, of cavalry, artillery, and infantry—enough to have eaten Paul Jones and his whole equipage. Nay, the very square in which my father's house stands could even then have furnished a body of armed men sufficient to have headed back as large a party as he could well have landed. However, the novel is a very clever one, and the sea-scenes and characters in particular are admirably drawn; and I advise you to read it as soon as possible. I have little news to send from Abbotsford; *Spice* is much better, though still asthmatic; she is extremely active, and in high spirits, though the most miserable, thin, long-backed creature I ever saw. She is extremely like the shadow of a dog on the wall; such a sketch as a child makes in its first attempts at drawing a monster—with a large head, four feet, and a most portentous longitude of back. There was great propriety in Miss Harriet's dream after all, for if ever a dog needed six legs, poor Spice certainly requires a pair of additional supporters. She is now following me a little, though the duty of body-guard has devolved for the present on a cousin of hers, a fierce game devil, that goes at every thing, and has cowed Ourisque's courage in a most extraordinary degree, to Lady Scott's great vexation. Here is a tale of dogs, and dreams, and former days, but the only pleasure in writing is to write whatever comes readiest to the pen. My wife and Anne send kindest compliments of congratulation, as also Charles, who has come down to spend four or five months with us; he is just entered at Brazen-nose—on fire to be a scholar of classical renown, and studying (I hope the humour will last) like a very dragon. —Always, my dear Miss Edgeworth, with best love to the bride and to dear Harriet, very much yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

*To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.*

"Abbotsford, March 13, 1824.

"My dear Terry,

"We are now arrived here, and in great bustle with painters, which obliges me to press you about the mirrors. If we cannot have them soon, there is now an excellent assortment at Trotter's, where I can be supplied, for I will hardly again endure to have the house turned upside down by upholsterers—and wish the whole business ended, and the house rid of that sort of cattle once for all. I am only ambitious to have one fine mirror over the chimney-piece; a smaller one will do for the other side of the room. Lady Scott has seen some Bannockburn carpets, which will answer very well, unless there are any bespoken. They are putting up my presses, which look very handsome. In the drawing-room the cedar doors and windows, being well varnished, assume a most rich and beautiful appearance. The Chinese paper in the drawing-room is most beautiful, saving the two ugly blanks left for these mirrors of d———n, which I dare say you curse as heartily as I do. I wish you could secure a parcel of old caricatures, which can be bought cheap, for the purpose of papering two *cabinets de l'eau*. John Ballantyne used to make great hawls in this way. The Tory side of the question would of course be most acceptable; but I don't care about this, so the prints have some spirit. Excuse this hasty and pressing letter; if you saw the plight we are in you would pity and forgive. At Baldock, as I have had at you. My mother whips me, and I whip the top. Best compliments to Mrs Terry.—Believe me always yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

*To Archibald Constable, Esq , Polton House, Lasswade.*

" Abbotsford, 29th March, 1824.

" My dear Constable,

" Since I received your letter I have been on the look-out for a companion for you, and have now the pleasure to send one bred at Abbotsford of a famous race. His name has hitherto been Cribb, but you may change it if you please. I will undertake for his doing execution upon the rats, which Polton was well stocked with when I knew it some seventeen or eighteen years ago. You must take some trouble to attach Mr Cribb, otherwise he will form low connexions in the kitchen, which are not easily broken off. The best and most effectual way is to feed him yourself for a few days.

" I congratulate you heartily, my good old friend, on your look-forward to domestic walks and a companion of this sort; and I have no doubt your health will gradually be confirmed by it. I will take an early opportunity to see you when we return to Edinburgh. I like the banks of the Esk, which to me are full of many remembrances, among which those relating to poor Leyden must come home to you as well as to me. I am ranging in my improvements—painting my baronial hall with all the scutcheons of the Border clans, and many similar devices. For the roof-tree I tried to blazon my own quarterings, and succeeded easily with eight on my father's side; but on my mother's side I stuck fast at the mother of my great-great-grandfather. The ancestor himself was John Rutherford of Grundisnock, which is an appanage of the Hunthill estate, and he was married to Isabel Ker of Bloodylaws. I think I have heard that either this John of Grundisnock or his father was one of the nine sons of the celebrated Cock of Hunthill, who seems to have had a reasonable brood of chickens. Do you know any thing of the pedigree of the Hunt-

hills? The Earl of Teviot was of a younger branch, Rutherford of Quarrelholes, but of the same family. If I could find out these Rutherfords, and who they married, I could complete my tree, which is otherwise correct; but if not, I will paint clouds on these three shields, with the motto *Vixerunt fortes ante.* These things are trifles when correct, but very absurd and contemptible if otherwise. Edgerstane cannot help me; he only knows that my grandfather was a cousin of his —and you know he represents Hunthill. My poor mother has often told me about it, but it was to regardless ears. Would to God I had old Mrs Kedie of Leith, who screeded off all the alliances between the Andersons of Ettrick House and the Andersons of Ettrick Hall, though Michael was the name of every second man, and, to complete the mess, they intermarried with each other.—Yours truly, WALTER SCOTT."

A bad accident in a fox-chase occurred at this time to Sir Walter's dear friend Mr Scott of Gala. The ice-house at Abbotsford was the only one in the neighbourhood that had been filled during the preceding winter, and to Tom Purdie's care in that particular Mr Scott's numerous friends owed the preservation of his valuable life.

*To the Lord Montagu, &c., Ditton Park.*

"Edinburgh, 14th April, 1824.

"My dear Lord,

"You might justly think me most unmerciful, were you to consider this letter as a provoke requiring an answer. It comes partly to thank you twenty times for your long and most kind letter, and partly, which I think not unnecessary, to tell you that Gala may now, I trust, be considered as quite out of danger. He has swam for his life though, and barely saved it. It is

for the credit of the clan to state that he had no dishonour as a horseman by his fall. He had alighted to put his saddle to rights, and the horse, full of corn and little work, went off with him before he got into his seat, and went headlong down a sort of precipice. He fell at least fifteen feet without stopping, and no one that saw the accident could hope he should be taken up a living man. Yet, after losing a quart of blood, he walked home on foot, and no dangerous symptoms appeared till five or six days after, when they came with a vengeance. He continues to use the ice with wonderful effect, though it seems a violent remedy.

"How fate besets us in our sports and in our most quiet domestic moments! Your lordship's story of the lamp makes one shudder, and I think it wonderful that Lady Montagu felt no more bad effects from the mere terror of such an accident; but the gentlest characters have often most real firmness. I once saw something of the kind upon a very large scale. You may have seen at Somerset House an immense bronze chandelier with several hundred burners, weighing three or four tons at least. On the day previous to the public exhibition of the paintings, the Royal Academicians are in use, as your Lordship knows, to give an immensely large dinner-party to people of distinction, supposed to be patrons of the art, to literary men, to amateurs in general, and the Lord knows whom besides. I happened to be there the first time this ponderous mass of bronze was suspended. It had been cast for his Majesty, then Prince Regent, and he not much liking it—I am surprised he did not, as it is very ugly indeed—had bestowed it on the Royal Academicians. Beneath it was placed, as at Ditton, a large round table, or rather a tier of tables, rising above each other like the shelves of a dumb-waiter, and furnished with as many glasses, tumblers, decanters, and

so forth, as might have set up an entire glass shop—the numbers of the company, upwards of 150 persons, requiring such a supply. Old West presided, and was supported by Jockey of Norfolk on the one side, and one of the royal Dukes on the other. We had just drunk a preliminary toast or two, when—the Lord preserve us!—a noise was heard like that which precedes an earthquake, the links of the massive chain, by which this beastly lump of bronze was suspended, began to give way, and the mass descending slowly for several inches encountered the table beneath, which was positively annihilated by the pressure, the whole glass-ware being at once destroyed. What was very odd, the chain, after this manifestation of weakness, continued to hold fast; the skilful inspected it and declared it would yield no farther—and we, I think to the credit of our courage, remained quiet and continued our sitting. Had it really given way, as the architecture of Somerset House has been in general esteemed unsubstantial, it must have broke the floor like a bombshell, and carried us all down to the cellars of that great national edifice. Your Lordship's letter placed the whole scene in my recollection. A fine paragraph we should have made.*

"I think your Lordship will be much pleased with the fine plantation on Bowden Moor. I have found an excellent legend for the spot. It is close by the grave of an unhappy being, called *Wattie Waeman* (whether the last appellative was really his name, or has been given him from his melancholy fate, is uncertain), who being all for love and a little for stealing, hung himself there seventy or eighty years since (*quere*, where did he find a tree?) at once to revenge himself of his mistress

* This story is also told in Scott's Essay on the Life of Kemble. See his Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xx. pp. 195-7.

and to save the gallows a labour. Now, as the place of his grave and of his suicide is just on the verge where the Duke's land meets with mine and Kippilaw's—(you are aware that where three lairds' lands meet is always a charmed spot)—the spirit of Wattie Waeman wanders sadly over the adjacent moors, to the great terror of all wandering wights who have occasion to pass from Melrose to Bowden. I begin to think which of his namesakes this omen concerns, for I take Walter Kerr of Kippilaw to be out of the question. I never heard of a Duke actually dying for love, though the Duke in the Twelfth Night be in an alarming way. On the other hand, Sir John Græme of the West Countrie, who died for cruel Barbara Allan, is a case in point against the Knight. Thus, in extreme cases, your Duke loses his head, whereas your Knight or Esquire is apt to retain it upon a neck a little more elongated than usual. I will pursue the discussion no further, as the cards appear to turn against me. The people begin to call the plantation Waeman's Wood—rather a good name.

"It is quite impossible your Lordship should be satisfied with the outside view of my castle, for I reckon upon the honour of receiving your whole party, *quot quot adestis*, as usual, in the interior. We have plenty of room for a considerable number of friends at bed as well as board. Do not be alarmed by the report of the gas, which was quite true, but reflects no dishonour on that mode of illumination. I had calculated that fifteen hundred cubic feet of gas would tire out some five-and-twenty or thirty pair of feet of Scotch dancers, but it lasted only till six in the morning, and then, as a brave soldier does on his post, went out when burned out. Had I kept the man sitting up for an hour or two to make the gas as fast as consumed, I should have spoiled a good story.

"My hall is in the course of having all the heavy parts of my armorial collection bestowed upon it, and really, though fanciful, looks very well, and I am as busy as a bee, disposing suits of armour, battle-axes, broad-swords, and all the knick-nacks I have been breaking my shins over in every corner of the house for these seven years past, in laudable order and to the best advantage.

"If Mr Blakeney be the able person that fame reports him, he will have as great a duty to perform as his ancestor at Stirling Castle;* for to keep so young a person as my chief, in his particular situation, from the inroads of follies, and worse than follies, requires as much attention and firmness as to keep Highland claymores and French engineers out of a fortified place. But there is an admirable garrison in the fortress, kind and generous feelings, and a strong sense of honour and duty which Duke Walter has by descent from his father and grandfather. God send him life and health, and I trust he will reward your Lordship's paternal care, and fulfil my hopes. They are not of the lowest, but such as must be entertained by an old and attached friend of the family who has known him from infancy. My friend Lord John wants the extreme responsibility of his brother's situation, and may afford to sow a few more wild oats, but I trust he will not make the crop a large one. Lord * * * and his tutor have just left us for the south, after spending three or four days with us. They could not have done worse than sending the young Viscount to Edinburgh, for though he is really an unaffected natural young man, yet it was absurd to expect that he should study hard when he had six invi-

* General Blakeney, grandfather to Lord M.'s friend, was governor of Stirling Castle in 1745.

tations for every hour of every evening. I am more and more convinced of the excellence of the English monastic institutions of Cambridge and Oxford. They cannot do all that may be expected, but there is at least the exclusion of many temptations to dissipation of mind; whereas with us, supposing a young man to have any pretensions to keep good society—and, to say truth, we are not very nice in investigating them—he is almost pulled to pieces by speculating mammas and flirting misses. If a man is poor, plain, and indifferently connected, he may have excellent opportunities of study at Edinburgh; otherwise he should beware of it.

"Lady Anne is very naughty not to take care of herself, and I am not sorry she has been a *little* ill, that it may be a warning. I wish to hear your Lordship's self is at Bath. I hate unformed complaints. A doctor is like Ajax—give him light and he may make battle with a disease; but, no disparagement to the Esculapian art, they are bad guessers. My kindest compliments, I had almost said *love*, attend Lady Isabella. We are threatened with a cruel deprivation in the loss of our friend Sir Adam, the first of men. A dog of a banker has bought his house for an investment of capital, and I fear he must trudge. Had I still had the Highland piper * in my service, who would not have refused me such a favour, I would have had him dirked to a certainty—I mean this cursed banker. As it is, I must think of some means of poisoning his hot rolls and butter, or setting his house on fire, by way of revenge. It is a real affliction. I am happy to hear of Lady Margaret's good looks. I was one of her earliest acquaintance, and at least half her godfather, for I took the vows on me for somebody or other who, I dare say, has never thought

* John of Skye had left Abbotsford—but he soon returned.

half so often of her as I have done. And so I have written out my paper and, I fear, your Lordship's patience. My respectful compliments attend Lady Montagu and the young ladies of Ditton.—Always most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The estate of Gattonside was purchased about this time by Mr George Bainbridge of Liverpool—and Sir Adam and Lady Ferguson, to Scott's great regret, went a year or two afterwards to another part of Scotland. The "cursed banker," however, had only to be known to be liked and esteemed. Mr Bainbridge had, among other merits, great skill in sports—especially in that which he has illustrated by the excellent manual entitled "The Fly-fisher's Guide;" and Gattonside-house speedily resumed its friendly relations with Abbotsford.

The next letter was in answer to one in which Lord Montagu had communicated his difficulties about fixing to which of the English Universities he should send the young Duke of Buccleuch.

*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c.*

"Edinburgh, 15th June, 1824.

"My dear Lord,

"I was much interested by your Lordship's last letter. For some certain reasons I rather prefer Oxford to Cambridge, chiefly because the last great University was infected long ago with liberalism in politics, and at present shows some symptoms of a very different heresy, which is yet sometimes blended with the first—I mean enthusiasm in religion—not that sincere zeal for religion, in which mortals cannot be too fervid, but the far more doubtful enthusiasm which makes religion a motive and a pretext for particular lines of thinking

in politics and in temporal affairs. This is a spirit which, while it has abandoned the lower classes, where perhaps it did some good, for it *is* a guard against gross and scandalous vice—has transferred itself to the upper classes, where, I think, it can do little but evil—disuniting families, setting children in opposition to parents, and teaching, as I think, a new way of going to the Devil for God's sake. On the other hand, this is a species of doctrine not likely to carry off our young friend; and I am sure Mr Blakeney's good sense will equally guard him against political mistakes, for I should think my friend Professor Smyth's historical course of lectures likely to be somewhat Whiggish, though I dare say not improperly so. Upon the whole, I think the reasons your Lordship's letter contains in favour of Cambridge are decisive, although I may have a private wish in favour of Christ Church, which I dare say will rear its head once more under the new Dean. The neighbourhood of Newmarket is certainly in some sort a snare for so young persons as attend college at Cambridge: but, alas! where is it that there be not snares of one kind or other? Parents, and those who have the more delicate task of standing in the room of parents, must weigh objections and advantages, and without expecting to find any that are without risk, must be content to choose those where the chances seem most favourable. The turf is no doubt a very forceful temptation, especially to a youth of high rank and fortune. There is something very flattering in winning, when good fortune depends so much on shrewdness of observation, and, as it is called, knowingness; the very sight is of an agitating character; and perhaps there are few things more fascinating to young men, whose large fortune excludes the ordinary causes of solicitude, than the pleasures and risks of the race

course; and though, when indulged to excess, it leads to very evil consequences, yet, if the Duke hereafter should like to have a stud of racers, he might very harmlessly amuse himself in that way, provided he did not suffer it to take too eager possession of his mind, or to engross his time. Certainly one would rather he had not the turn at all, but I am far more afraid of sedentary games of chance, for wasting time and fortune, than I am of any active out-of-door's sport whatsoever.

"Old Paradise did not number a neighbourhood among its pleasures; but Gattonside has that advantage, and great will be the regret of the said neighbours, if Sir Adam and Lady Eve are turned out. I parted with them at Blair-Adam on this day—for, taking a fit of what waiting-maids call *the clevers*, I started at six this morning, and got here to breakfast. As it blew hard all night, there was a great swell on the ferry, so that I came through

'Like Chieftain to the Highlands bound,
Crying, boatman, "do not tarry—"'*

or rather,

'Like Clerk unto the Session bound.'

"I could have borne a worse toss, and even a little danger, since the wind brought rain, which is so much wanted. One set of insects is eating the larch—another the spruce. Many of the latter will not, I think, recover the stripping they are receiving. Crops are looking well, except the hay, which is not looking at all. The sheep are eating roasted grass, but will not be the worse mutton, as I hope soon to prove to your Lordship at Abbotsford.—I am, always, my dear Lord,

Yours faithful to command,

WALTER SCOTT.

* Campbell's "Lord Ullin's Daughter."

"P.S.—I am here, according to the old saying, *bird-alane;* for my son Charles is fishing at Lochleven, and my wife and daughter (happy persons!) are at Abbotsford. I took the opportunity to spend two days at Tyninghame. Lord Haddington complains of want of memory, while his conversation is as witty as a comedy, and his anecdote as correct as a parish register.

"I will be a suitor for a few acorns this year, if they ripen well at Ditton, or your other forests. Those I had before from you (raised in the nursery, not planted out) are now fine oak plants."

Among Scott's visiters of the next month, first in Edinburgh, and afterwards on Tweedside, were the late amiable and venerable Dr Hughes, one of the Canons-residentiary of St Paul's, and his warm-hearted lady. The latter had been numbered among his friends from an early period of life, and a more zealously affectionate friend he never possessed. On her way to Scotland she had halted at Keswick to visit Mr Southey, whom also she had long known well, and corresponded with frequently. Hence the following letters.

*To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland.*

"My dear Southey,

"Do you remember Richardson's metaphor of two bashful lovers running opposite to each other in parallel lines, without the least chance of union, until some good-natured body gives a shove to the one, and a shove to the other, and so leads them to form a junction? Two lazy correspondents may, I think, form an equally apt subject for the simile, for here have you and I been silent for I know not how many years, for no other reason than the uncertainty which wrote last, or, which was in duty bound to write first. And here comes

my clever, active, bustling friend, Mrs Hughes, and tells me that you regret a silence which I have not the least power of accounting for, except upon the general belief that I wrote you a long epistle after your kind present of the Lay of the Laureate, and that I have once every week proposed to write you a still longer, till shame of my own indolence confirmed me in my evil habits of procrastination—when here comes good Mrs Hughes, gives me a shake by the collar, and assures me, that you are in pretty nearly the same case with myself—and, as a very slight external impulse will sometimes drive us into action when a long succession of internal resolutions have been made and broke, I take my pen to assure my dear Southey, that I love him as well as if our correspondence had been weekly or daily. The years which have gone by have found me dallying with the time, and you improving it as usual —I tossing my ball and driving my hoop, a greyheaded schoolboy, and you plying your task unremittingly for the instruction of our own and future ages. Yet I have not been wholly idle or useless—witness five hundred acres of moor and moss, now converted into hopeful woodland of various sizes, to the great refreshment, even already, of the eyes of the pilgrims who still journey to Melrose. I wish you could take a step over the Border this season with Mrs Southey, and let us have the pleasure of showing you what I have been doing. I twice intended an invasion of this sort upon your solitude at Keswick, one in spring 1821, and then again in the summer of the same year when the coronation took place. But the convenience of going to London by the steam-packet, which carries you on whether you wake or sleep, is so much preferable to a long land journey, that I took it on both occasions. The extreme

rapidity of communication, which places an inhabitant of Edinburgh in the metropolis sooner than a letter can reach it by the post, is like to be attended with a mass of most important consequences, some, or rather most of them good, but some also which are not to be viewed without apprehension. It must make the public feeling and sentiment of London, whatever that may chance to be, much more readily and emphatically influential upon the rest of the kingdom, and I am by no means sure that it will be on the whole desirable that the whole country should be as subject to be moved by its example as the inhabitants of its suburbs. Admitting the metropolis to be the heart of the system, it is no sign of health when the blood flows too rapidly through the system at every pulsation. Formerly in Edinburgh and other towns the impulse received from any strong popular feeling in London was comparatively slow and gradual, and had to contend with opposite feelings and prejudices of a national or provincial character; the matter underwent a reconsideration, and the cry which was raised in the great mart of halloo and humbug was not instantly echoed back, as it may be in the present day and present circumstances, when our opinion, like a small drop of water brought into immediate contiguity with a bigger, is most likely to be absorbed in and united with that of the larger mass. However, you and I have outlived so many real perils, that it is not perhaps wise to dread those that are only contingent, especially where the cause out of which they arise brings with it so much absolute and indisputable advantage. What is Wordsworth doing? I was unlucky in being absent when he crossed the Border. I heartily wish I could induce him to make a foray this season, and that you and Mrs Southey, and Miss Wordsworth, my very good

and well remembered friend, could be of the party. Pray think of this, for the distance is nothing to well resolved minds, and you in particular owe me a visit. I have never quite forgiven your tour in Scotland without looking in upon my poor premises. Well, as I have re-appeared like your floating island, which I see the newspapers aver hath again, after seven years' soaking, become visible to mortal ken, it would not be fair in me to make my visit too long a one—so, with kindest respects to Mrs Southey, in which my wife sincerely joins, I am always most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT.

"8th July, 1824, Edinburgh.

"Address Abbotsford, Melrose.

"You may have heard that about four years since I was brought to death's door by a violent, and at the same time most obstinate complaint, a sort of spasms in the stomach or diaphragm, which for a long time defied medicine. It gave way at length to a terrific course of calomel, such as made the cure almost as bad as the disease. Since that time, I have recovered even a better portion of health than I generally had before, and that was excellent. I do not indeed possess the activity of former days either on foot or horseback; but while I can ride a pony, and walk five or six miles with pleasure, I have no reason to complain. The rogue Radicals had nearly set me on horseback again, but I would have had a good *following* to help out my own deficiencies, as all my poor neighbours were willing to fight for *Kirk* and *King*."

Mr Southey's next letter enclosed a MS. copy of his Ode on the King's Northern Progress of 1822. Sir Walter, in his reply, adverts to the death of Louis XVIII., which occurred on the 17th of September, 1824—and prophesies the fate of his successor.

*To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland.*

"Bowhill, 26th Sept., 1824.

"My dear Southey,

"I did not immediately thank you for your beautiful poem on the King's Visit, because I was afraid you might think that I was trespassing too much on time which is always well employed; but I must not let the ice settle again on the stream of our correspondence, and therefore, while I have a quiet morning, I employ part of it to thank you for the kindness you have done me as a friend, and still more for the honour you have bestowed on my country. I hope these verses are one day to see the light, and am too much personally interested not to expect that period with impatience.

"I had a letter from Gifford some time since, by which I perceive with regret he renounces further management of the Quarterly. I scarce guess what can be done by Murray in that matter, unless he could prevail on you to take the charge. No work of the kind can make progress (though it may be kept afloat) under a mere bookselling management. And the difficulty of getting a person with sufficient independence of spirit, accuracy of judgment, and extent of knowledge, to exercise the profession of Aristarch, seems very great. Yet I have been so long out of the London circles that new stars may have arisen, and set for aught I know, since I was occasionally within the hemisphere.

"The King of France's death, with which one would think I had wondrous little to do, has produced to me the great disappointment of preventing Canning's visit. He had promised to spend two or three days at Abbotsford on his road to Edinburgh,* and it is the more pro-

* Mr Canning spent some part of the summer of 1824 in a visit to the Marquess Wellesley, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; and

voking, as I dare say, after all, there is no farther occasion for his being at his post than arises from matter of mere form, since I suppose there is no reason to think that Charles X. will change the line of policy adopted by his brother. I remember him in Edinburgh about 1794, one of the most elegant men in address and exterior whom I ever saw. Strange times we have lived in! I am speaking of Charles X. as a Frenchman of 1661 might have spoken of Charles II. By the way, did you ever observe how easy it would be for a good historian to run a parallel betwixt the great Rebellion and the French Revolution, just substituting the spirit of fanaticism, for that of soi-disant philosophy. But then how the character of the English would rise—whether you considered the talents and views of the great leaders on either side, or the comparative moderation and humanity with which they waged their warfare! I sometimes think an instructive comparative view might be made out, and it would afford a comfortable augury that the Restoration in either case was followed by many amendments in the Constitution. I hope Louis Baboon will not carry the matter so far as to require completing the parallel by a second Revolution—but it would be very singular if the devotion of this King to the Catholic priests and forms should occasion such a catastrophe. Heber has promised to come down here, and if so, I will perhaps return with him as far as Rokeby, and, if we can, take Keswick on our way, were it but to see you for an hour. All this, however, is speculation. I am just sending off my younger son to Oxford. My eldest is an officer in the 15th hussars, and I believe will soon get that object

had proposed to return from Dublin by the way of Scotland. I think there was to have been a public dinner in his honour at Edinburgh.

of every young officer's ambition, a troop, which would be great luck.—Believe me, dear Southey, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

In October of this year, Sir Walter's son Charles began his residence at Brazen-nose College, Oxford. The adoption of this plan implied finally dropping the appointment in the civil service of the East India Company, which had been placed at his disposal by Lord Bathurst in the spring of 1820; a step, I need not observe, which, were there any doubt on that subject, would alone be sufficient to prove, to the conviction of the most envious sceptic, that the young gentleman's father at this time considered his own worldly fortunes as in a highly prosperous situation. A writership in India is early independence;—in the case of a son of Scott, so conducting himself as not to discredit the name he inherited, it could hardly have failed to be early wealth. And Sir Walter was the last man to deprive his boy of such safe and easy prospects of worldly advantage, turning him over to the precarious chances of a learned profession in Great Britain, unless in the confidence that his own resources were so great as to render ultimate failure in such a career a matter of no primary importance.

The Vicar of Lampeter, mean-while, had become a candidate for the rectorship of a new classical academy, founded this year at Edinburgh; and Sir Walter Scott's influence was zealously exerted in behalf of his son's learned and estimable tutor. Mr Williams was successful in his object; and at the opening of the institution (1st October) the Poet appeared in Edinburgh to preside over the ceremonial in which this

excellent friend was so deeply concerned. I transcribe what follows from a report prepared at the time (but never until now published) by the honorary secretary of the academy, Mr John Russell, W. S.:—

"The Rev. Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart. (minister of the parish), at the request of Sir Walter Scott, opened the business of the meeting, by an eloquent and impressive prayer, in which he invoked the blessing of the Almighty on the institution.

"Sir Walter Scott then rose, and observed, that it had been determined by the directors, that some account should be given on this occasion of the nature and meaning of the institution. He wished that some one better qualified had been appointed for this purpose; but as the duty had been imposed upon him, he should endeavour to discharge it as briefly as possible. In Scotland, and before such an assembly, it was unnecessary for him to enlarge on the general advantages of education. It was that which distinguished man from the lower animals in the creation—which recorded every fact of history, and transmitted them in perfect order from one generation to another. Our forefathers had shown their sense of its importance by their conduct; but they could little have conceived the length to which discoveries in science and literature had gone in this age; and those now present could as little anticipate to what extent posterity might carry them. Future ages might probably speak of the knowledge of the 18th and 19th centuries, as we now do of that of the 15th and 16th. But let them remember that the progress of knowledge was gradual; and as their ancestors had been anxious to secure to them the benefits of education, so let it be said of the present age, that it paved the way for the improvement of the generations which were to follow. He need not repeat to Scotsmen, that at an early period the most anxious solicitude had been shown on this subject. While Scotland was torn with convulsions, and the battle-brand was yet red, our forefathers had sat down to devise the means of spreading the blessings of knowledge among their posterity, as the most effectual means of preventing those dark and bloody times from recurring. We had but lately sheathed a triumphant sword, and lived now in a period of profound peace; and long, long might it be before the sword was again unsheathed! This was therefore a proper time for improving the institutions of the country, and endeavouring to cause its literature to keep pace with its high martial achievements. In

forming an institution like the present, there was something generous and disinterested. The founders of a library might enjoy the benefit of reading in that library. The founder of an hospital had had sometimes the melancholy gratification, in the decline of his fortunes, of reposing under the roof of the asylum which his charity had erected for others: but such could not be the case with those who subscribed for this institution. It was like a torch held out in the hand of a dead man, which imparted light to others, but to the bearer it gave none. He therefore called on the young to attend to the instructions that would be addressed to them in this academy, erected exclusively for their benefit, and not for that of those by whom it had been founded.

"The establishment of those excellent institutions, the Parochial Schools, had early induced the moral and orderly habits which had so much tended to raise the character of our countrymen. King James, whatever had been his failings in other respects, had attended to the education of the youth, and had founded an institution (the High School), which flourished at this moment, the pride and boast of our City; but, from the great increase of population, its size was now found inadequate to the duty originally intended. Since its establishment, the city had increased to six times the extent it then was; and the great number of subscribers to the present institution, proved the general feeling that something must be done to relieve the Metropolitan school. It was true there were many private seminaries, whose teachers were men of great talent; but schools of that description were not so well calculated to secure the education of children as an institution like the present. It was plain to the most common understanding, that one man could not teach four or five classes of pupils with the same success that one man could teach one class; that was quite plain. A jealousy had been entertained that the design of the present institution was to hurt the more ancient seminary. Look at those who were the leading members of this society;—many of them who had received their education at the High School, whose fathers and grandfathers had been instructed there, and who also had their children there: they were not capable of entertaining a thought to the prejudice of that seminary. The effect of the present institution would only be to relieve the High School of superfluous scholars, and thereby leave the hands of its teachers more at liberty to educate those who were left. He trusted he should hear nothing more of such an unworthy motive. He was sure there would be no petty jealousies—no rivalry between the two institutions, but the honourable and fair

rivalry of scholarship. He was convinced Palinurus would not slumber at the helm, while he beheld another vessel striving to gain the port before him.

"In appropriating the funds which had so liberally been placed at their disposal, the directors had observed the strictest economy. By the ingenuity of Mr Burn, the Architect, whose plans for, and superintendence of the buildings had been a labour of love, it would be observed, that not much had been lost. If they had not the beauty of lavish ornament, they had at least taste and proportion to boast of—a more important part of architecture than high finishing. The directors had a more difficult and delicate duty to perform than the rearing of stone walls, in choosing the gentlemen who were to carry into execution their plans; a task important beyond the power of language to describe, from the number of certificates produced by men of talent who were willing to abandon their situations in other seminaries, and to venture the credit of their reputation and prospects in life on this experimental project of ours—a task so delicate, that the directors were greatly at a loss whom to choose among seventy or eighty individuals, of almost equal merit, and equally capable of undertaking the task. The one principle which guided the directors in their selection was—who were most likely to give satisfaction to them and to the public? He trusted they had been successful in the performance of this task. The University of Oxford had given them one of its most learned scholars (the Rector), in the flower of his age, with fifteen years' experience as a teacher, and of whose acquirements, in that gentleman's presence, he would not speak in the terms he would employ elsewhere. To him the directors trusted as the main pillar of the establishment: he was sure also he would be well supported by the other gentlemen; and that the whole machine would move easily and smoothly.

"But there was still another selection of no mean difficulty. In the formation of a new, they must lose some of the advantages of an ancient and venerable institution. One could not lay his hands on the head of his son, and say, this is the same bench on which I sat; this is the voice which first instructed me.—They had to identify their children with a new institution. But they had something to counterbalance these disadvantages. If they had not the venerable Gothic temple, the long sounding galleries, and turreted walls—where every association was favourable to learning—they were also free from the prejudices peculiar to such seminaries,—the 'rich windows which *exclude* the light, and passages that lead to nothing.' Something might be gained from novelty. The attention

of the directors had been particularly turned to the fact, that while Scotland was, on the whole, the best informed country in Europe, it had not of late produced many eminent classical scholars. The observation of Dr Johnson was well known, that in learning Scotland resembled a besieged city, where every man had a mouthful, but no man a bellyful. It might be said, in answer to this, that it was better education should be divided into mouthfuls, than served up at the banquet of some favoured individuals, while the great mass were left to starve. But, sturdy Scotsman as he was, he was not more attached to Scotland than to truth; and it must be admitted that there was some foundation for the Doctor's remark. The directors were anxious to wipe off this reproach, and for this purpose had made every provision in their power. They had made some additions to the course adopted in the High School, but in no case had they made any innovation from the mere love of change. It was a part of their plan to lay a foundation for a thorough knowledge of the Latin tongue, by the most precise and careful study of its elemental principles. With this they meant to conjoin the study of Greek, to be begun at an earlier period, and prosecuted to a greater extent, than hitherto was customary in Scotland. It was the language of the fathers of history, and of a people whose martial achievements and noble deeds were the ornament of their pages. At no moment was the study of that beautiful language so interesting as at present, when the people among whom it was still in use, were again, as he trusted, about to emancipate themselves from slavery and barbarism, and take their rank among free nations. There would also be instruction in Writing and Arithmetic—and a class for the study of Mathematics, from which the directors hoped great advantage would accrue to the pupils. There would be another class in this institution, which was not to be found in any other similar academy—a class for the study of English Literature. It had been justly remarked, that the study of classics had sometimes led to the neglect of our own language, and that some scholars could express themselves better in Latin than in English. To avoid this error, a teacher was added to the institution, who was to instruct the boys in the principles of English Composition, and to connect with this a knowledge of the history of their own country. He would have the youths taught to venerate the patriots and heroes of our own country, along with those of Greece and Rome; to know the histories of Wallace and Bruce, as well as those of Themistocles and of Cæsar; and that the recollection of the fields of Flodden and Bannockburn, should not be lost in those of Platæa and Marathon.

The masters would open their classes every morning with prayer; and a portion of Scripture would be read by one of the boys every Monday morning, before the commencement of the week's labours.

"In conclusion, Sir Walter addressed a few words to his young friends around him. He observed, that the public could not have given a more interesting mark of their confidence in the managers of the seminary, than they had done, in placing under their direction these young persons, characterised by the Roman matron as her most precious jewels, for every one of whom he was sensible more than one bosom was at present beating, anxious for their future happiness and prosperity. He exhorted them to give their whole souls and minds to their studies, without which it was little that either their teachers or directors could do. If they were destined for any of the learned professions, he begged them to remember that a physician without learning was a mere quack; a lawyer without learning was a pettifogger; and a clergyman without learning was like a soldier without a sword, who had not the means of enforcing the authority of his Divine Master. Next to a conscience void of offence towards God and man, the greatest possession they could have was a well cultivated mind; it was that alone which distinguished them from the beasts that perish. If they went to India or other distant quarters of the globe, it would sweeten their path, and add to their happiness. He trusted that his words, poor as they were, would sink into their hearts, and remain on their memories, long after they had forgotten the speaker. He hoped they would remember the words of their reverend friend, who had just implored the blessing of God upon their studies, for they were the outpourings of the soul of one not young in years, nor void of experience; and when they were come to manhood, they might say to their children, 'Thus and thus were we taught, and thus and thus we teach you. By attending to these things we rose to honour and distinction.' Happy (said Sir Walter) will it be if you can say, 'I have followed that which I heard. May you do so and live.'"

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The Academy, opened under these auspices, throve from the beginning, and may now be considered as one of the most important among the national establishments of Scotland; nor have Sir Walter's anticipations

as to the result of honourable rivalry between it and the old High School been disappointed.

As it happens, I have to place in the same page with Sir Walter's speech, in honour of classical learning, the record of a *false quantity* which his generosity may almost be said to have made classical. In the course of that same October, died his faithful friend and servant Maida, the noblest and most celebrated of all his dogs—might I not safely say of all dogs that ever shared the fellowship of man? His exit was announced in this letter to the young Oxonian.

*To Charles Scott, Esq. Brazen-nose College, Oxford.*

"Abbotsford, 22d October, 1824.

"My dear Charles,

"I am glad to hear that you are safely settled at College, I trust with the intention of making your residence there subservient to the purposes of steady study, without which it will be only a waste of expense and of leisure. I believe the matter depends very much on a youth himself, and therefore I hope to hear that you are strenuously exerting yourself to hold an honourable situation among the students of your celebrated university. Your course will not be unmarked, as something is expected from the son of any literary person; and I sincerely hope in this case those expectations will be amply gratified.

"I am obliged to Mr Hughes* for his kind intentions in your favour, as I dare say that any to whom he introduces you will be acquaintance worth cultivating. I

* John Hughes, Esq. of Oriel College—son of Sir Walter's old friends, Dr and Mrs Hughes—the same whose "Itinerary of the Rhone," &c., is mentioned with high praise in the Introduction to Quentin Durward.

shall be glad to hear that you have taken up your ground at College, and who are like to compose your set. I hope you will make your way to the clever fellows and not put up with Doldrums. Every man soon falls behind that does not aspire to keep up with the foremost in the race.

"I have little domestic news to tell you. Old Maida died quietly in his straw last week after a good supper, which, considering his weak state, was rather a deliverance. He is buried below his monument, on which the following epitaph is engraved—though it is great audacity to send Teviotdale Latin to Brazen-nose—

'Maidæ Marmoreâ dormis sub imagine Maida,
Ad januam domini sit tibi terra levis.'

Thus Englished by an eminent hand,—

'Beneath the sculptured form which late you wore,
Sleep soundly, Maida, at your master's door.'

"Yesterday we had our solemn hunt and killed fourteen hares,—but a dog of Sir Adam's broke her leg, and was obliged to be put to death in the field. Little Johnnie talks the strangest gibberish I ever heard, by way of repeating his little poems. I wish the child may ever speak plain. Mamma, Sophia, Anne, and I send love. —Always your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

The monument here mentioned was a *leaping-on-stone*, to which the skill of Scott's master-mason had given the shape of Maida recumbent. It had stood by the gate of Abbotsford a year or more before the dog died, and after he was laid under it, his master, dining that evening at Chiefswood, said, over his glass of toddy and cigar, that he had been bothering his brains to make an epitaph for his ancient favourite, but

could not please himself. He said it must be in Latin, because *Maida* seemed made on purpose to close a hexameter—and begged, as I was fresher off the irons than himself, that I would try to help him. The unfortunate couplet above printed was what suggested itself at the moment—and though his own English version of it, extemporized next minute, was so much better, on his way home he gave directions to have it engraved, and engraved it was before many hours had passed. Mr James Ballantyne was the first person that saw it; believing it to be Scott's, he admired it, of course—and of course, also, he thought fit to print it soon after (as Sir Walter's) in his newspaper—but his memory had played him a trick before he reached Edinburgh, and as he printed the lines they showed not only their original blunder, but another of his own creation; he had put *jaces* for *dormis*. His printing the thing at all was unfortunate; for some friend (I believe it was Lord Minto) had pointed out in the interim the false quantity of *januam*, and the mason was just about to rectify that by substituting some legitimate dactyl or spondee, suggested by this critic, when the newspaper reached Abbotsford. Sir Walter on seeing it said, "Well, well, since Ballantyne has printed the lines at all, I shan't have any corrections made here—I shall write and tell him of *his* blunder, and let the other stand as it is." But mean-time "*Sir Walter Scott's false quantities*" had headed various paragraphs in the newspapers both in Edinburgh and in London; and, strange to say, even the undoubted double blunder of Ballantyne's edition found gallant defenders. A Mr Lionel Berguer, who, I think, had published some poems, and dedicated them to Scott, was one of these champions: and Sir Walter himself

had twice pleaded guilty in the newspapers, before the matter was allowed to rest. It is sufficient to quote the following :—

*To the Editor of the Morning Post.*

" Abbotsford, Nov. 12, 1824.

" Sir,—As I am a friend to truth, even in trifles, I cannot consent to shelter myself under the classical mantle which Mr LIONEL BERGUER and some unknown friend have chosen to extend, in their charity, over my faults in prosody. The two lines were written in mere whim, and without the least intention of their being made public. In the first line, the word *jaces* is a mistake of the transcriber (whoever took that trouble); the phrase is *dormis*, which I believe is good prosody. The error in the second line, *ad januam*, certainly exists, and I bow to the castigation. I must plead the same apology which was used by the great Dr JOHNSON, when he misinterpreted a veterinary phrase of ordinary occurrence —" ignorance—pure ignorance " was the cause of my blunder. Forty years ago, longs and shorts were little attended to in Scottish education; and I have, it appears, forgot the little I may then have learned. I have only to add, that I am far from undervaluing any branch of scholarship, because I have not the good fortune to possess it, and heartily wish that those who succeed us may have the benefit of a more accurate classical education than was common in my earlier days.

" The inscription cannot now be altered; but if it remains a memorial of my want of learning, it shall not, in addition, convey any imputation on my candour. I should have been ashamed, at a more stirring time, to ask admission for this plea of guilty; but at present you

may think it worth a place in your paper. *Pugna est de paupere regno.*—I remain your obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

The culprit whose sin had brought this controversy on Sir Walter, was not in his vicinity when it was going on—nor cognizant of it until he had committed himself; and on the same 12th of November, being the Poet's last day at Abbotsford for the long vacation, he indited the following rhymes—which savour of his recent overhauling of Swift and Sheridan's doggrel epistles.

*To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Northumberland Street, Edinburgh.*

" Dear John,—I some time ago wrote to inform his
Fat worship of *jaces*, misprinted for *dornis*;
But that several Southrons assured me the *januam*,
Was a twitch to both ears of Ass-Priscian's cranium.
You, perhaps, may observe that one Lionel Berguer,
In defence of our blunder appears a stout arguer:
But at length I have settled, I hope, all these clatters,
By a *rowt* in the papers—fine place for such matters.
I have, therefore, to make it for once my command, sir,
That my gudeson shall leave the whole thing in my hand, sir,
And by no means accomplish what James says you threaten,
Some banter in Blackwood to claim your dog-Latin.
I have various reasons of weight, on my word, sir,
For pronouncing a step of this sort were absurd, sir.
Firstly, erudite sir, 'twas against your advising
I adopted the lines this monstrosity lies in;
For you modestly hinted my English translation
Would become better far such a dignified station.
Second—how, in God's name, would my bacon be saved,
By not having writ what I clearly engraved?
On the contrary, I, on the whole, think it better
To be whipped as the thief, than his lousy resetter.
Thirdly—don't you perceive that I don't care a boddle
Although fifty false metres were flung at my noddle,

For my back is as broad and as hard as Benlomon's,
And I treat as I please both the Greeks and the Romans;
Whereas the said heathens might look rather serious
At a kick on their drum from the scribe of Valerius.
And, fourthly and lastly—it is my good pleasure
To remain the sole source of that murderous measure.
So *stet pro ratione voluntas*—be tractile,
Invade not, I say, my own dear little dactyl;
If you do, you'll occasion a breach in our intercourse:
To-morrow will see me in town for the winter-course,
But not at your door, at the usual hour, sir,
My own pye-house daughter's good prog to devour, sir.
Ergo—peace, on your duty, your squeamishness throttle,
And we'll soothe Priscian's spleen with a canny third bottle.
A fig for all dactyls, a fig for all spondees,
A fig for all dunces and Dominie Grundys;
A fig for dry thrapples, south, north, east, and west, sir,
Speates and raxes* ere five for a famishing guest, sir;
And as Fatsman† and I have some topics for haver, he'll
Be invited, I hope, to meet me and Dame Peveril,
Upon whom, to say nothing of Oury and Anne, you a
Dog shall be deemed if you fasten your *Janua*.

"P. S.—*Hoc jocose*—but I am nevertheless in literal earnest. You incur my serious displeasure if you move one inch in this contemptible rumpus. So adieu till to-morrow.—Yours affectionately, W. S."

* There is an excellent story (but too long for quotation) in the *Memorie of the Somervilles* (vol. i. p. 240) about an old Lord of that family, who, when he wished preparations to be made for high feasting at his Castle of Cowthally, used to send on a billet inscribed with this laconic phrase, "*Speates and raxes*,"—i. e. *spits and ranges*. Upon one occasion, Lady Somerville (being newly married, and not yet skilled in her husband's hieroglyphics) read the mandate as *spears* and *jacks*, and sent forth 200 armed horsemen, whose appearance on the moors greatly alarmed Lord Somerville and his guest, who happened to be no less a person than King James III.

† *Fatsman* was one of Mr James Ballantyne's many *aliases*. Another (to which Constable mostly adhered) was "Mr Basketfill"—an allusion to the celebrated printer Baskerville.

In the course of that November several of the huge antique buildings which gave its peculiar character to the Old Town of Edinburgh, perished by fire; and no one, it may be believed, witnessed this demolition with more regret than Sir Walter. He says to Lord Montagu on the 18th,—

"My dear Lord,

"Since I came here I have witnessed a horrible calamity. A fire broke out on Monday night in the High Street, raged all night, and great part of the next day, catching to the steeple of the Tron Church, which being wood was soon in a blaze, and burned like regular fire-works till all was consumed. All this while the flames were spreading down to the Cowgate amongst those closes where the narrowness of the access, and the height of the houses, rendered the approach of engines almost impossible. On Tuesday night a *second* fire broke out in the Parliament Square, greatly endangering the Courts of Justice, and the Advocates' more than princely Library. By great exertions it was prevented approaching this public building; and Sir William Forbes' bank also escaped. But all the other houses in the Parliament Square are totally destroyed; and I can conceive no sight more grand or terrible than to see these lofty buildings on fire from top to bottom, vomiting out flames like a volcano from every aperture, and finally crashing down one after another into an abyss of fire, which resembled nothing but hell; for there were vaults of wine and spirits which sent up huge jets of flame, whenever they were called into activity by the fall of these massive fragments. Between the corner of the Parliament Square and the South Bridge all is destroyed, excepting some new buildings at the lower extremity; and the devastation

has extended down the closes, which I hope will never be rebuilt on their present, I should say their *late* form. The general distress is, of course, dreadful.—Ever yours,

W. Scott."

## CHAPTER XIII.

TALES OF THE CRUSADERS BEGUN—A CHRISTMAS AT ABBOTSFORD, IN EXTRACTS FROM THE MS. JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN BASIL HALL, R. N.—DEC. 29, 1824—JAN. 10, 1825.

During the Winter Session of his Court, Sir Walter resumed his usual course of literary exertion, which the supervision of carpenters, painters, and upholsterers had so long interrupted. The Tales of the Crusaders were begun; but I defer, for the present, the history of their progress.

Abbotsford was at last finished, and in all its splendour; and at Christmas, a larger party than the house could ever before have accommodated, were assembled there. Among the guests was one who kept a copious journal during his stay, and has kindly furnished me with a copy of it. I shall, therefore, extract such passages as bear immediately upon Sir Walter Scott himself, who certainly was never subjected to sharper observation than that of his ingenious friend Captain Basil Hall.

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EXTRACTS FROM CAPTAIN HALL'S JOURNAL.

"Abbotsford, December 29, 1824.

"This morning my brother James and I set out from Edinburgh in the Blucher coach, at eight o'clock, and

although we heard of snow-storms on the hills, we bowled along without the smallest impediment, and with a fine bright sun and cheerful green fields around us, with only here and there a distant streak of snow in some shady ravine. We arrived in good time—and found several other guests at dinner. . . . . .

" The public rooms are lighted with oil-gas in a style of extraordinary splendour. The passages, also, and the bedrooms, are lighted in a similar manner. The whole establishment is on the same footing—I mean the attendance and entertainment—all is in good order, and an air of punctuality and method, without any waste or ostentation, pervades every thing. Every one seems at his ease; and although I have been in some big houses in my time, and amongst good folks who studied these sort of points not a little, I don't remember to have any where met with things better managed in all respects.

" Had I a hundred pens, each of which at the same time should separately write down an anecdote, I could not hope to record one half of those which our host, to use Spenser's expression, ' Welled out alway.' To write down one or two, or one or two dozen, would serve no purpose, as they were all appropriate to the moment, and were told with a tone, gesture, and look suited exactly to the circumstances, but which it is of course impossible in the least degree to describe.

" Abbotsford, 30th December.

" This morning Major Stisted, my brother, and I, accompanied Sir Walter Scott on a walk over his grounds, a distance of five or six miles. He led us through his plantations, which are in all stages of advancement, and

entertained us all the way with an endless string of anecdotes, more or less characteristic of the scenes we were passing through. Occasionally he repeated snatches of songs, sometimes a whole ballad, and at other times he planted his staff in the ground and related some tale to us, which though not in verse, came like a stream of poetry from his lips. Thus, about the middle of our walk, we had first to cross, and then to wind down the banks of the Huntly-burn, the scene of old Thomas the Rymer's interview with the Queen of the Fairies. Before entering this little glen, he detained us on the heath above till he had related the whole of that romantic story, so that by the time we descended the path, our imaginations were so worked upon by the wild nature of the fiction, and still more by the animation of the narrator, that we felt ourselves treading upon classical ground; and though the day was cold, the path muddy and scarcely passable, owing to the late floods, and the trees all bare, yet I do not remember ever to have seen any place so interesting as the skill of this mighty magician had rendered this narrow ravine, which in any other company would have seemed quite insignificant.

"On reaching an elevated point near a wild mountain lake, from whence we commanded a view of many different parts of his estate, and saw the progress of his improvements, I remarked that it must be interesting to engage in planting. 'Interesting!' he cried; 'You can have no idea of the exquisite delight of a planter—he is like a painter laying on his colours—at every moment he sees his effects coming out. There is no art or occupation comparable to this; it is full of past, present, and future enjoyment. I look back to the time when there was not a tree here, only bare heath: I look round and see thousands of trees growing up, all of which, I may say almost each of which, have received

my personal attention. I remember five years ago looking forward, with the most delighted expectation, to this very hour, and as each year has passed, the expectation has gone on increasing. I do the same now; I anticipate what this plantation and that one will presently be, if only taken care of, and there is not a spot of which I do not watch the progress. Unlike building, or even painting, or indeed any other kind of pursuit, this has no end, and is never interrupted, but goes on from day to day, and from year to year, with a perpetually augmenting interest. Farming I hate; what have I to do with fattening and killing beasts, or raising corn only to cut it down, and to wrangle with farmers about prices, and to be constantly at the mercy of the seasons? There can be no such disappointments or annoyances in planting trees.'

"It is impossible to touch for an instant on any theme, but straightway he has an anecdote to fit it. 'What is the name of that bright spot,' I said, 'on which the sun is shining just there in the line of Cowdenknowes?'—'That,' said he, 'is called *Haxel Cleugh.* I was long puzzled,' he added, 'to find the etymology of this name, and enquired in vain on every hand to discover something suitable. I could learn nothing more than that near the Cleugh there was a spot which tradition said had been a Druidical place of worship. Still this did not help me, and I went on for a long time tormenting myself to no purpose. At length when I was reading very early one fine summer's morning, I accidentally lighted upon a passage in some German book, which stated that Haxa was the old German term for a Druidess.* Here, then, the mystery was solved, and I was so enchanted with the discovery, that I was wild with impatience to

* *Hexe* is modern German for *witch.*

tell it to some one; so away I mounted up stairs to my wife's room, where she was lying fast asleep. I was well aware that she neither knew nor cared one jot about the matter; that did not signify—tell it I must immediately to some one; so I roused her up, and although she was very angry at being awakened out of her comfortable doze, I insisted upon bestowing Haxa, and Haxel Cleugh, and all my beautiful discovery of the Druid's temple upon her notwithstanding. Now, don't you understand this?' said he, turning to me—' Have not you sometimes on board your ship hit upon something which delighted you, so that you could not rest till you had got hold of some one down whose throat you might cram it—some stupid dolt of a lieutenant, or some gaping midshipman, on whom in point of fact it was totally thrown away?—but still you had the satisfaction of imparting it, without which half the pleasure is lost.'

" Thus we strolled along, borne as it were on this strange stream of song and story. Nothing came amiss to him; the most trivial and commonplace incident, when turned in his hand, acquired a polish and a clearness of the first water. Over all, too, there was breathed an air of benignity and good-will to all men, which was no less striking than the eloquence and point of his narrations. The manner in which he spoke of his neighbours, and of distant persons of whose conduct he disapproved, was all in the same spirit. He did not cloak their faults—he spoke out manfully in contempt of what was wrong; but this was always accompanied by some kindly observation, some reservation in favour of the good they possessed, some natural and proper allowance. I say natural, because I should be giving a wrong impression of the character of his conversation were I to let it be supposed that these excuses or extenuations were mawkishly uttered, or that he acted a part, and as a

matter of rule said something in favour even of those he condemned. . . . . .

"He is loyal to the back-bone, to use a vulgar phrase; but with all this there is nothing servile or merely personal in his loyalty. When the King was coming to Edinburgh, and it was known he was to pass over Waterloo Bridge, a gentleman suggested to him the fitness of concealing or erasing the inscription respecting Prince Leopold* on the arch of the bridge, as it was known there was a coolness between the King and his son-in-law. 'What!' said he, 'shall we insult the King's son-in-law, and through him the King himself, by any allusion to, or notice of, what is so unworthy of all parties? Shall we be ashamed of our own act, and without any diminution of our respect for those to whom the compliment was paid, draw back and eat our words because we have heard of a petty misunderstanding? Shall we undo that which our respect for the King and his family alone prompted us, right or wrong, to do? No, sir! sooner than that inscription should be erased, or even covered with flags or flowers, as you propose, or that any thing, in short, should be done to show that we were ashamed of our respect for Prince Leopold, or sought to save the King's feelings by a sacrifice of our own dignity, I would with my own hand set the town of Edinburgh on fire, and destroy it!' . . . . . .

"In the evening we had a great feast indeed. Sir Walter asked us if we had ever read Christabel, and upon some of us admitting with shame that we had never even seen it, he offered to read it, and took a chair in the midst of all the party in the library. He read the

* Prince Leopold had been present at the opening of this bridge—and the inscription records that circumstance.

poem from end to end with a wonderful pathos and variety of expression—in some parts his voice was deep and sonorous, at others loud and animated, but all most carefully appropriate, and very sweetly modulated. In his hands, at all events, Christabel justified Lord Byron's often-quizzed character of it—'a wild and singularly original and beautiful poem.'

"Sir Walter also read us, with the utmost delight, or, as it is called, completely *con amore*, the famous poem on Thomas the Rymer's adventure with the Queen of the Fairies; but I am at a loss to say which was the most interesting, or even I will say poetical—his conversational account of it to us to-day on the very spot, Huntly-burn, or the highly characteristic ballad which he read to us in the evening.*

"Interspersed with these various readings were hundreds of stories, some quaint, some pathetical—some wild and fairylike, and not a few warlike, especially of the old times, and now and then one of Wellington and Waterloo; and sometimes he gave anecdotes of things close to his own doors,—ay, and incidents of this very day, which we had passed unseen, but which were now kindled into interest and importance, as if by the touch of a magician's wand.

"There was also much pleasing singing—many old ballads, and many pretending to be old ballads, were sung to the harp and pianoforte. The following is so exquisitely pathetic, that I copied it, after I went to my room, from the young ladies' book, and give it a place, though perhaps it is to be found somewhere in print:—

"My love he built me a bonnie bower," &c. &c. †

* See this ballad in the Border Minstrelsy, vol. iv.

† See "The Border Widow's Lament," in the Minstrelsy, vol. ii. p. 94.

" Abbotsford, 31st December, 1824.

" The fashion of keeping up old holidays by bonefires and merriment, is surely decreasing. Or is it that we, the recorders of these things, are getting older, and take consequently less interest in what no longer amuses us, so that we may be deceived in supposing the taste of our juniors to be altered, while in fact it is only our own dispositions and habits that are changed in complexion? It may be so—still I suspect that the progress of education, and the new habits of industry, and the more varied and generous objects which have been opened of late years to all classes, have tended greatly to banish those idle ceremonies and jovialities which I can just recollect in my childhood as being of doubtful pleasure, but which our ancestors describe as being near the summit of their enjoyments. Be this as it may in the eyes of others, I confess, for my part, that your Christmas and New-years' parties seem generally dull. There are several causes for this: The mere circumstance of being brought together for the express purpose of being merry, acts in opposition to the design in view; no one is pleased on compulsion; then it seldom happens that a party is quite well sorted; and a third reason is, that it will scarcely ever happen that a family circle can be drawn together on two successive years, without betraying to the eye of affection some fatal blanks 'that were not there before.'

" I took notice at supper, as we waited for the moment that was to give birth to a new year, that there was more than one 'unquiet drooping of the eye;' and amidst the constrained hilarity of the hour, I could trace a faltering in some voices, which told distinctly enough to an ear that was watching for it, that however present

the smiling cheek and laughing eye might seem to be, the bleeding heart was far away.*

"It is true enough that it is to 'moralize too deeply' to take things in this way, and to conjure up with an ingenuity of self-annoyance these blighting images. So it is, and so I acted; and as *my* heart was light and unloaded with any care, I exerted myself to carry through the ponderous evening—ponderous only because it was one set apart to be light and gay. I danced reels like a wild man, snapped my fingers, and hallooed with the best of them, flirted with the young ladies at all hazards—and with the elder ones, of which there was a *store*, I talked and laughed finely. As a suite of rooms was open, various little knots were formed, and nothing would have been nicer had we been left alone, but we must needs be dancing, singing, playing, jesting, or something or other different from that which we might be naturally disposed to be doing. Wherever the Great Unknown went, indeed, there was a sort of halo of fun and intelligence around him; but his plan of letting all things *bide* was not caught up somehow, and we were *shoved* about more than enough.

"Supper was over just at midnight, and as the clock was striking twelve, we all stood up, after drinking a hearty bumper to the old year, and having joined hands crosswise, each with his right hand seizing his neighbour's left, all joined chorus in an appropriate song by Sir Adam Ferguson, a worthy knight, possessed of infinite drollery. Then followed other toasts of a loyal description, and then a song, a good red-hot Jacobite song *to the King*†—a ditty which, a century ago, might

* The widow and daughters of the poet's brother, Mr Thomas Scott, were of the party.

† "Here's to the King, boys,
Ye ken wha I mean, boys," &c. &c.
See Hogg's *Jacobite Relics*.

have cost the company their heads, or at least their hands—but now it did no more than draw broad smiles of affected apprehension, and that roguish sort of look natural when people are innocently employed in doing what is held to be mischievous, but harms no one.

"Still, still it was ponderous. Not all the humour and miraculous vivacity and readiness of our host could save it—long blank pauses occurred—and then a feeble whisper—but little more, and the roar of a jolly toast subsided into a hollow calm. I dwell upon all this merely to make people consider how useless it is to get up such things nowadays—for if Walter Scott, with all appliances and means to boot—in his noble house—surrounded by his own choice friends—full of health and all he can wish, is unable to exempt a Hogmanay party from the soporific effect proverbially attendant upon manufactured happiness, who else need venture on the experiment! At about one we broke up, and every one seemed rejoiced to be allowed to go about at pleasure: while the horses were putting to, to carry off our numerous company, and shawls were hunting for, people became bright again, and not being called upon to act any part, fell instantly into good-humour; and we had more laughing and true hilarity in the last half hour than in all the evening before. The Author of Waverley himself seemed to feel the reviving influence of freedom, and cruized about from group to group, firing in a shot occasionally to give spirit to what was going on, and then *hauling off* to engage with some other—to show his stores of old armour—his numerous old carved oak cabinets, filled with the strangest things—adder-stones of magical power—fairies' rings—pearls of price, and amongst the rest a mourning ring of poor Lord Byron's, securely stowed away in one of the inmost drawers!

"On one of those roving expeditions he pushed his head into the circle of which I happened to make one, and seizing upon some casual analogy, said, 'that reminds me of a story of a fair, fair lady,' &c. All became mute and crowded about him, and he began, in a low, solemn, and very impressive voice, with a sort of mock earnestness which fixed the attention in a wonderful degree, and gave an air of truth and importance to what he was telling, as if it were some material fact which he had to communicate for our serious consideration. 'There was,' said he, 'a very merry party collected in a town in France, and amongst all the gay lords and ladies there assembled, there was none who caused so great a sensation, as a beautiful young lady who danced, played, and sang in the most exquisite style. There were only two unaccountable circumstances belonging to her—one was that she never went to church, or attended family prayers, the other, that she always wore a slender black velvet band or girdle round her waist. She was often asked about these peculiarities, but she always evaded the interrogatories, and still by her amiable manners and beauty won all hearts. One evening, in a dance, her partner saw an opportunity of pulling the loop of her little black girdle behind; it fell to the ground, and immediately the lady became pale as a sheet—then gradually shrunk and shrunk—till at length nothing was to be seen in her place but a small heap of grey ashes!' . . . .

"I forgot to mention that in the course of a conversation about ghosts, fears in the dark, and such matters, Sir Walter mentioned having once arrived at a country inn, when he was told there was no bed for him. 'No place to lie down at all?' said he. 'No,' said the people of the house—'None, except a room in which there is a corpse lying.' 'Well,' said he, 'did the person die of any contagious disorder?' 'Oh no—not at all,'

said they. 'Well, then,' continued he, 'let me have the other bed. So,' said Sir Walter, 'I laid me down, and never had a better night's sleep in my life.'

"Abbotsford, January 1, 1825.

"Yesterday being Hogmanay there was a constant succession of *Guisards—i. e.* boys dressed up in fantastic caps, with their shirts over their jackets, and with wooden swords in their hands. These players acted a sort of scene before us, of which the hero was one Goloshin, who gets killed in a 'battle for love,' but is presently brought to life again by a doctor of the party.

"As may be imagined, the taste of our host is to keep up these old ceremonies. Thus, in the morning, yesterday, I observed crowds of boys and girls coming to the back door, where each one got a penny and an oaten-cake. No less than 70 pennies were thus distributed—and very happy the little bodies looked, with their well stored bags.

"People accustomed to the planting of trees are well aware how grateful the rising generations of the forest are to the hand which thins and prunes them. And it makes one often melancholy to see what a destructive sort of waste and retardation goes on by the neglect of young woods—how much beauty is lost—how much wealth is wantonly thrown away, and what an air of sluttishness is given to scenery which, with a very little trouble, might have adorned and embellished, not to say enriched many a great estate.

"I never saw this mischievous effect of indolence more conspicuously made manifest than in a part of the grounds here. Sir Walter's property on one side is bounded by a belt of fir trees, say twenty yards across. The 'march' runs directly along the centre of this belt, so that one-half of the trees belong to his neighbour, the

other to him. The moment he came in possession he set about thinning and pruning the trees, and planting a number of hardwood shoots under the shelter of the firs. In a very short time the effect was evident: the trees, heretofore choked up, had run into scraggy stems, and were sadly stunted in growth; but having now room to breathe and to take exercise, they have shot up in the course of a few years in a wonderful manner, and have set out branches on all sides, while their trunks have gradually lost the walking-stick or hop-pole aspect which they were forced to assume before, and the beeches and oaks and other recent trees are starting up vigorously under the genial influence of their owner's care. Meanwhile the obstinate, indolent, or ignorant possessor of the other half of the belt has done nothing to his woods for many years, and the growth is apparently at a stand in its original ugliness and uselessness. The trees are none of them above half the height of Sir Walter's, and few, if any, of half the diameter. So very remarkable is the difference, that without the most positive assurances I could not believe it possible that it could have been brought about by mere care in so short a period as five years. The trees on the one side are quite without value, either to make fences or to sell as supports to the coal-pits near Berwick, while Sir Walter already reaps a great profit from the mere thinning out of his plantations. To obtain such results, it will be easily understood that much personal attention is necessary, much method and knowledge of the subject. It happens, however, that in this very attention he finds his chief pleasure—he is a most exact and punctual man of business, and has made it his favourite study to acquire a thorough knowledge of the art.

"His excellent taste in planting has produced a very important effect. In laying out his plantations, he

was guided, partly by a feeling that it was natural and beautiful to follow the 'lie of the ground,' as it is called, and partly by an idea that by leading his young wood along hollows and gentle slopes, he would be taking the surest course to give it shelter. But though he had only the prosperity and picturesqueness of the wood in view, he has also, he finds, added to the value of the adjoining fields that remain unplanted. The person who formerly rented one farm came to him and offered to take the unplanted part again, and to pay the same rent for it as he had paid originally for the whole, although one-half of it is now a young forest and effectually enclosed. On Sir Walter's expressing his surprise at this, the man said that, both for growing corn and for the pasture of sheep, the land was infinitely improved in value by the protection which his rising woods and numerous enclosures afforded.

"This will seem still more remarkable when it is mentioned that, whenever circumstances permitted, his best land has been selected for planting trees. 'I have no patience,' he exclaimed, 'with those people who consider that a tree is not to be placed except on a soil where nothing else will grow. Why should the noblest of all vegetables be condemned to the worst soil? After all it is the most productive policy to give trees every advantage, even in a pecuniary point of view, as I have just shown you. The immediate return in cash is not so great indeed as from wheat, but it is eventually as sure, if matters be properly attended to—and this is all over and above one's great and constantly increasing source of enjoyment in the picturesque beauty which rising woods afford.'

"Abbotsford, January 2, 1825.

"At breakfast to-day we had, as usual, some 150

stories—God knows how they came in, but he is, in the matter of anecdote, what Hudibras was in figures of speech—'his mouth he could not ope—but out there flew a trope'—so with the Great Unknown, his mouth he cannot open without giving out something worth hearing—and all so simply, good-naturedly, and naturally! I quite forget all these stories but one:—'My cousin Watty Scott' (said he) 'was a midshipman some forty years ago in a ship at Portsmouth; he and two other companions had gone on shore, and had overstaid their leave, spent all their money, and run up an immense bill at a tavern on the Point—the ship made the signal for sailing, but their landlady said, "No, gentlemen—you shall not escape without paying your reckoning;"—and she accompanied her words by appropriate actions, and placed them under the tender keeping of a sufficient party of bailiffs. They felt that they were in a scrape, and petitioned very hard to be released; "No, no," said Mrs Quickly, "I must be satisfied one way or t'other: you must be well aware, gentlemen, that you will be totally ruined if you don't get on board in time." They made long faces, and confessed that it was but too true. "Well," said she, "I'll give you one chance—I am so circumstanced here that I cannot carry on my business as a single woman, and I must contrive somehow to have a husband, or at all events I must be able to produce a marriage certificate; and therefore the only terms on which you shall all three have leave to go on board to-morrow morning is, that one of you consent to marry me. I don't care a d—— which it is, but, by all that's holy, one of you I will have, or else you all three go to jail, and your ship sails without you!" The virago was not to be pacified, and the poor youths, left to themselves, agreed after a time to draw lots, and it happened to fall on my cousin. No time was lost,

and off they marched to church, and my poor relative was forthwith spliced. The bride, on returning, gave them a good substantial dinner and several bottles of wine a piece, and having tumbled them into a wherry sent them off. The ship sailed, and the young men religiously adhered to the oath of secrecy they had taken previous to drawing lots. The bride, I should have said, merely wanted to be married, and was the first to propose an eternal separation. Some months after, at Jamaica, a file of papers reached the midshipmen's berth, and Watty, who was observed to be looking over them carelessly, reading an account of a robbery and murder at Portsmouth, suddenly jumped up, in his ecstasy forgot his obligation of secrecy, and cried out "Thanks be to God, my wife is hanged!"'

"Mixed up with all this fun, Sir Walter has much admirable good sense, and makes many valuable reflections, which are apt sometimes to escape notice from the unpretending manner in which they are introduced. Talking of different professions to-day, and of the universal complaint of each one being overstocked, he observed—'Ay, ay, it is the same in all; we wear our teeth out in the hard drudgery of the outset, and at length when we do get bread to eat—we complain that the crust is hard—so that in neither case are we satisfied.'

"Taking up a book with a pompous dedication to the King, he read the first paragraph, in which the style was inverted in such a manner as scarcely to be intelligible, but yet was so oddly turned as to excite curiosity. 'Now, this,' he said, 'is just like a man coming into a room bottom foremost in order to excite attention: he ought to be kicked for his pains.'

"Speaking of books and booksellers, he remarked, that, considered generally, an author might be satisfied

if he got one-sixth part of the retail price of his book for his share of the profits;—this seems very moderate—but who should have such means of making a right calculation on such a point?

"Some conversation arose about stranger tourists, and I learned that Sir Walter had at length been very reluctantly obliged to put a stop to the inundation of these people, by sending an intimation to the inns at Melrose and Selkirk to stop them by a message, saying it was not convenient to receive company at Abbotsford, unless their visit had been previously announced and accepted. Before this, the house used to be literally stormed: no less than *sixteen* parties, all uninvited, came in one day—and frequently eight or ten forced themselves in. So that it became impossible for the family to have a moment to themselves. The tourists roved about the house, touched and displaced the armour, and I dare say (though this was not admitted) many and many a set carried off some trophy with them.

"Just as breakfast was concluded to-day he said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, I shall read prayers at eleven, when I expect you all to attend.' He did not treat the subject as if ashamed of it, which some do. He did not say 'those who please may come, and any one who likes may stay away,' as I have often heard. He read the Church of England service, and did it with singular beauty and impressiveness, varying his voice according to the subject; and as the first lesson was from a very poetical part of Isaiah, he kindled up, and read it with a great deal of animation, without, however, overstepping the solemnity of the occasion.

"We had an amusing instance of his playfulness this evening. Something introduced the subject of lions. 'Well,' said he, 'I think it amusing enough to be a lion; what think you, Captain Hall?' 'Oh,' I answered, 'I

am always too much flattered by it—and nothing gratifies me more than being made to wag my tail and roar in my small way.' 'That's right,' he said, turning to the company, 'nothing is more diverting than being handed about in that way, and for my part I enjoy it exceedingly; I was once hunted by a well-known lion-catcher, who I found was also in search of Miss O'Neill, and it so chanced that we met together at Highgate, or in that neighbourhood, and we were carried out to see some grounds, in the course of which both the lion and the lioness found themselves in a place where there was an iron railing all round. "Now," said I, "if you have got a lock there to turn upon us, you have us both for ever, and your fortune is made. You have only to hoist a flag on a pole at the top of the hill and stick up a few bills, saying that you have just caught those two beautiful animals, and in an hour's time you have half the metropolis to see us at a shilling a-head, and we shall roar in grand style—shall we not, Miss O'Neill?"

"He then laughed much at some lions about town, who disdained being stirred up with a long pole, as every good lion ought to be. 'You and I, Captain Hall, know better, and we enjoy ourselves accordingly in our noble beast capacity—whereas those poor wretches lose all the good things we get—because, forsooth, they must be loved and admired, and made much of for their mere *human* qualities—while we are content with our pretensions as monsters!'

"Abbotsford, January 3.

"There has been an immense flood in the Tweed lately, which overflowed its banks, and did a world of mischief, though not quite so great as that at St Petersburgh. But what is comical, this rise of the river actually set Abbotsford on fire: at least the offices on the *haugh*

below the house, where the water rose three feet perpendicular above the floor; and happening to encounter a pile of unslaked lime in the corner of a cow-house, presently set it in a blaze! There was no want of water you may be sure—'too much of water, poor Ophelia'—and no great damage was done. This flood raised the water considerably more than a foot; exactly three inches higher than that of 1812, the highest ever known up to that date.

"A neighbouring laird and his son joined our party yesterday, Mr Henderson of Eildon Hall, and the proprietor of the well-known hills of that name. His history may amuse you. He was, long ago, clerk of the Cocket at Leith, an office worth L.50 a-year, and this was his whole substance. It chanced that Mr Ramsay, the banker, was in want of a clerk, and said to a friend, 'Do you know any one who writes a good hand, is honest and steady, and who never opens his mouth from one year's end to the other?' 'I know your man exactly,' said the other; and Mr H. was accordingly made clerk under Mr Ramsay, with whom he kept up the necessary communication by means of a sort of telegraph, as it is alleged, as Mr R. had a great dislike to speech. In process of time our hero insinuated himself so completely into the good graces of his patron, that he got a small share in the bank, then a larger, and so on. It happened about this time that the man who had taken Craigleith quarry failed for want of capital; and our friend, the silent clerk of the Cocket, who had the bank under his lee, bought up the contract, and cleared ten thousand a-year for nine or ten years by this one job. So that what with the bank, and sundry other speculations, which all turned out well, he amassed great wealth, and resolved to turn country gentleman.

"One day in company he was making enquiries about

land, and a gentleman opposite was so eloquent in praise of Eildon Hall, then in the market, that he was seized with a desire to be the purchaser. 'What is the price?' asked he. 'Why,' said the other, 'I dare say you may get it for forty thousand pounds.' 'Indeed!' said our quarryman, 'I will give that with pleasure—and I authorize you to make the offer.'

"Now, the amusing thing about this transaction is, that the estate in question had been some time advertised for sale for thirty-seven thousand pounds only; thus our worthy friend of the telegraph gave three thousand more for the property than was asked, to the great delight and astonishment of Messrs Todd and Romanes, the agents for the sale. A fact, by the way, which goes far to support the Lord Chancellor's estimate of a banker's intellects.

"With all this, our taciturn friend makes 'a very decent Lord,' is well esteemed in the neighbourhood, and, as he has the discretion now to take good advice, he is likely to do well.

"Sir Adam Ferguson, who is the most humorous man alive, and delights in showing up his neighbour, mentioned to him the other day that the Eildon estate was sadly in want of lime. 'Eh!' said the laird, 'I am much obliged to you for that hint—I am just ruined for want o' hints!'

"At this moment there is a project for making a railway from Berwick to Kelso, as all the world knows; but the Great Unknown and several other gentlemen are anxious to tail on a branch from Melrose to meet the great one; and as Mr H., with his long purse and his willingness to receive hints, is no bad card in the game, he has been brought up to Abbotsford for a week: his taciturnity has long ago fled, and he is now one of the most loquacious Borderers going. Torwoodlee, too, and

his son the Skipper, came to breakfast to-day, in order that the whole party might have a consultation before going to the railroad meeting at Melrose. I should suspect that when the Author of Waverley sets his shoulders to any wheel, it must be in a devilish deep slough if it be not lifted out.

"As my brother James was obliged to return to Edinburgh, and I thought that I had staid long enough, we set out from Abbotsford after luncheon, very reluctantly, for the party had grown upon our esteem very much, and had lately been augmented by the arrival from England of Mr Lockhart, whom I wished to get acquainted with, and of Captain Scott, the poet's eldest son. The family urged me very much to stay, and I could only get away by making a promise to return for their little dance on Friday evening; so that it is not impossible this journal may have some additions made to it in the same strain."

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"Abbotsford, 7th January, 1825.

"To-day my sister Fanny and I came here. In the evening there was a dance in honour of Sir Walter Scott's eldest son, who had recently come from Sandhurst College, after having passed through some military examinations with great credit.

"We had a great clan of Scotts. There were no less than nine Scotts of Harden and ten of other families. There were others besides from the neighbourhood—at least half-a-dozen Fergusons, with the jolly Sir Adam at their head—Lady Ferguson, her niece Miss Jobson, the pretty heiress of Lochore—&c. &c. &c. . . . . .

"The evening passed very merrily, with much spirited dancing; and the supper was extremely cheerful and quite superior to that of Hogmanay."

" Abbotsford, 8th January.

" It is wonderful how many people a house can be made to hold upon occasions such as this; and when, in the course of the morning, the neighbours came to stream off to their respective homes, one stared, like the man in the Arabian Nights who uncorked the genie, thinking how the deuce they ever got in. There were a few who stayed a while to saunter about the dressed grounds, under the guidance of Sir Walter; but by one or two o'clock my sister and I found ourselves the only guests left, and on the Great Unknown proposing a walk to a point in his plantations called Turn-again, we gladly accepted his offer and set out.

" I have never seen him in better spirits, and we accompanied him for several hours with great delight. I observed that on this occasion the tone of his innumerable anecdotes was somewhat different from what it had been when James and I and some other gentlemen formed his companions. There was then an occasional roughness in the point and matter of the stories; but no trace of this to-day. He was no less humorous, however, and varied than before;—always appropriate, too—in harmony with the occasion, as it were—never lugging in stories by the head and shoulders. It is very difficult, I may say impossible, to give a correct conception of this by mere description. So much consists in the manner and the actual tone and wording of what is said; so much, also, which cannot be imparted, in the surrounding circumtances—the state of the weather—the look of the country —the sound of the wind in the trees close at hand—the view of the distant hills:—all these and a thousand other things produce an effect on the minds of those present which suits them for the reception of the conversation at the moment, and prevents any transfer of the senti-

ments produced thereby to any one differently circumstanced.

" On reaching the brow of the hill on the eastern side of one of his plantations, we came in sight of Melrose Abbey, on which there was a partial gleam of sunshine lighting up an angle of the ruins. Straightway we had an anecdote of Tom Purdie, his gamekeeper and *factotum*. Tom has been many years with Sir Walter, and being constantly in such company, has insensibly picked up some of the taste and feeling of a higher order. 'When I came here first,' said Tom to the factor's wife, 'I was little better than a beast, and knew nae mair than a cow what was pretty and what was ugly. I was cuif enough to think that the bonniest thing in a country-side was a corn field enclosed in four stane dykes; but now I ken the difference. Look this way Mrs Laidlaw, and I'll show you what the gentlefolks likes. See ye there now the sun glinting on Melrose Abbey? It's no aw bright, nor its no aw shadows neither, but just a bit screed o' light here—and a bit daud o' dark yonder like, and that's what they ca' picturesque; and, indeed, it maun be confessed it is unco bonnie to look at!'

" Sir Walter wished to have a road made through a straight belt of trees which had been planted before he purchased the property, but being obliged to return to Edinburgh, he entrusted it to Tom Purdie, his 'right-hand man.' 'Tom,' said he, 'you must not make this walk straight—neither must it be crooked.' 'Diel, Sir! than what maun it be like?' 'Why,' said his master, 'don't you remember when you were a shepherd, Tom, the way in which you dandered hame of an even? You never walked straight to your house, nor did you go much about; now make me just such a walk as you used to take yourself.' Accordingly, '*Tom's walk*' is a standing

proof of the skill and taste of the *ci-devant* shepherd, as well as of the happy power which his master possesses, in trifles as well as in great affairs, of imparting his ideas to those he wishes to influence. . . . . .

" In the course of our walk he entertained us much by an account of the origin of the beautiful song of 'Auld Robin Gray.' 'It was written (he said) by Lady Anne Lindsay, now Lady Anne Bernard. She happened to be at a house where she met Miss Suff Johnstone, a well-known person, who played the air, and accompanied it by words of no great delicacy, whatever their antiquity might be; and Lady Anne lamenting that no better words should belong to such a melody, immediately set to work and composed this very pathetic story. Truth, I am sorry to say, obliges me to add that it was a fiction. Robin Gray was her father's gardener, and the idea of the young lover going to sea, which would have been quite out of character here amongst the shepherds, was natural enough where she was then residing, on the coast of Fife. It was long unknown,' he added, 'who the author was; and indeed there was a clergyman on the coast whose conscience was so large that he took the burden of this matter upon himself, and pleaded guilty to the authorship. About two years ago I wrote to Lady Anne to know the truth—and she wrote back to say she was certainly the author, but wondered how I could have guessed it, as there was no person alive to whom she had told it. When I mentioned having heard it long ago from a common friend who was dead, she then recollected me, and wrote one of the kindest letters I ever received, saying she had till now not the smallest idea that I was the little *lame boy* she had known so many years before.'

" I give this anecdote partly from its own interest,

and partly for the sake of introducing the unconcerned allusion to his own lameness—which I have heard him mention repeatedly, in the same sort of way, without seemingly caring about it. Once speaking of the old city wall of Edinburgh (which, by the way, he says was built during the panic caused by the disastrous battle of Flodden Field)—he said it used to be a great *ploy* in his youth to climb the said wall. 'I used often to do it,' he observed, 'notwithstanding my bad foot, which made it no very easy job.'

"On coming to a broad path in the middle of the woods, we took notice of a finger-post, on which was written 'The *Rod* to Selkirk.' We made some remark about Tom's orthography, upon which he laughed, and said that that finger-post had gained him great popularity in the neighbourhood. 'I cannot say,' he remarked, 'that I had any such view when I ordered it to be put up. The public road, it is true, is not far off, and this leads through the very centre of my grounds, but I never could bring myself to make that a reason for excluding any person who finds it agreeable or advantageous to take over the hill if he likes. But although my practice in this respect had always been well-known, the actual admission of it, the avowed establishment of it as a sort of right, by sticking up the finger-post, was received as a kind of boon, and I got a world of credit for a thing which had certainly not any popularity for its object. Nevertheless,' he continued, 'I have no scruple in saying that what I did deserved the good people's acknowledgment; and I seriously disapprove of those proprietors who act on a different principle in these matters. Nothing on earth would induce me to put up boards threatening prosecution, or cautioning one's fellow-creatures to beware of man-traps and spring-guns. I hold that all such things are not only in the highest degree offensive and

hurtful to the feelings of people whom it is every way important to conciliate, but that they are also quite inefficient —and I will venture to say, that not one of my young trees has ever been cut, nor a fence trodden down, or any kind of damage done in consequence of the free access which all the world has to my place. Round the house, of course, there is a set of walks set apart and kept private for the ladies—but over all the rest of my land any one may rove as he likes. I please myself with the reflection that many people of taste may be indulging their fancies in these grounds, and I often recollect how much of Burns's inspiration was probably due to his having near him the woods of Ballochmyle to ramble through at his will when he was a ragged callant.'

"He told us of the different periods at which he had planted his grounds. 'I bought this property bit by bit,' he said, 'as accident threw the means of purchase into my hands; I could not lay it all out in a consistent plan, for when I first came here I merely bought a few acres and built a cottage, as a kind of occasional retreat from the bustle of Edinburgh. By degrees I got another and another farm, till all you now see came to me. If things go on improving at the rate they do in the matter of travelling, I dare say I shall be able to live here all the year round, and come out every day from the Court. At present I pass about seven months of the year at Abbotsford, but if the projected railway is established, and we have steam-coaches upon it running at twenty miles an hour, it will be merely good exercise to go in to breakfast and come back to dinner.'

"In a hilly country such as this one is more dependent upon the taste of one's neighbours than where the surface is flat, for the inequalities bring into view many distant points which one must constantly be wishing to see turned to advantage. Thus it is of consequence to

be on such friendly terms with the neighbourhood, especially the proprietors on the opposite side of the river, that they may take one's comfort and pleasure into consideration when they come to plant, or otherwise to embellish their ground. Sir Walter pointed out several different plantations which had been made expressly with a view to the improvement of the prospect from Abbotsford. The owner of one of these estates came over to him one day to point out the line which he had traced with a plough, as the limit of a new plantation, and asked Sir Walter how he liked it, or if he wished any alteration to be made. The Author of Waverley thanked him for his attention, and the two gentlemen climbed the hill above Abbotsford to take the matter into consideration. It was soon seen that, without extending the projected plantation, or diminishing its beauty with reference to the estate on which it was made, a new line might be drawn which would double its apparent magnitude, and greatly enhance the beauty of its form, as seen from Abbotsford. The gentleman was delighted to have an opportunity of obliging the Great well-known Unknown, and cantered back to change the line. The young trees are already giving sufficient evidence of the good taste of the proposer of the change, and, it may be said also, of his good sense and his good-nature, for, unless he possessed both in an eminent degree, all his gigantic talents would be insufficient to bring round about him the ready hearts and hands of all within his reach. Scott of Gala, for instance, has, out of pure kindness, planted, for a space of several miles, the whole of the opposite bank of the Tweed, and with great pains improved all the lines of his father's planting, solely to please his neighbour, and without any benefit to his own place. His worthy friend, also, of Eildon Hall, he told us to-day, had kindly undertaken, in the same spirit, to plant the base

of these two beautiful hills, which, without diminishing their grandeur, will greatly add to their picturesque effect, and, in fact, increase the bold magnificence of their summits.

" ' I make not a rule to be on intimate terms,' he told us, ' with all my neighbours—that would be an idle thing to do. Some are good—some not so good, and it would be foolish and ineffectual to treat all with the same cordiality; but to live in harmony with all is quite easy, and surely very pleasant. Some of them may be rough and *gruff* at first, but all men, if kindly used, come about at last, and by going on gently, and never being eager or noisy about what I want, and letting things glide on leisurely, I always find in the end that the object is gained on which I have set my heart, either by exchange or purchase, or by some sort of compromise by which both parties are obliged, and good-will begot if it did not exist before—strengthened if it did exist'——

" ' There, see,' he continued, ' that farm there, at the foot of the hill, is occupied by a respectable enough tenant of mine; I told him I had a great desire for him to try the effect of lime on his land. He said he doubted its success, and could not venture to risk so much money as it would cost. ' Well,' said I, ' fair enough; but as I wish to have the experiment tried, you shall have the lime for the mere carting; you may send to the place where it is to be bought, and at the term-day you shall strike off the whole value of the lime from the rent due to me.' When the day came, my friend the farmer came with his whole rent, which he laid down on the table before me without deduction. " How's this, my man, you are to deduct for the lime, you know." " Why, Sir Walter," replied he, " my conscience will not let me impose on you so far—the lime you recommended me to try, and which but for your suggestion I never would have tried,

has produced more than would have purchased the lime half-a-dozen times over, and I cannot think of making a deduction."'

"In this way, by a constant quiet interchange of good offices, he extends his great influence amongst all classes, high and low; and while in the morning, at breakfast-time, he gets a letter from the Duke of Wellington, along with some rare Spanish manuscripts taken at Vittoria*—at mid-day he is gossiping with a farmer's wife, or pruning his young trees cheek by jowl with Tam Purdie—at dinner he is keeping the table merry, over his admirable good cheer, with ten hundred good stories, or discussing railroads, blackfaced sheep, and other improvements with Torwoodlee—in the evening he is setting the young folks to dance, or reading some fine old ballad from Percy's Reliques, or some blackletter tome of Border lore, or giving snatches of beautiful songs, or relating anecdotes of chivalry—and ever and anon coming down to modern home life with some good honest practical remark which sinks irresistibly into the minds of his audience,—and all with such ease and unaffected simplicity as never, perhaps, was seen before in any man so gifted—so qualified to take the loftiest, proudest line at the head of the literature, the taste, the imagination of the whole world! Who can doubt that, after such a day as I have glanced at, his slumbers must be peaceful, and that remorse is a stranger to his bosom, and that all his renown, all his wealth, and the love of such 'troops of friends,' are trebly gratifying to him, and substantial, from their being purchased at no cost but that of truth and nature.

"Alas for poor Lord Byron, of whom he told us an

* About this time the Duke sent Scott some curious documents about the proposed duel between Charles V. and Francis I.

anecdote to-day, by which it appeared that his immense fame as an author was altogether insufficient to harden him against the darts of calumny or malevolence levelled at his private life. He quoted, with the bitterest despair, to Scott the strong expression of Shakspeare,

> Our pleasant vices are but whips to scourge us; *

And added, 'I would to God that I could have your peace of mind, Mr Scott; I would give all I have, all my fame, every thing, to be able to speak on this subject' (that of domestic happiness) 'as you do!'

"Sir Walter describes Lord Byron as being a man of real goodness of heart, and the kindest and best feelings, miserably thrown away by his foolish contempt of public opinion. Instead of being warned or checked by public opposition, it roused him to go on in a worse strain, as if he said, 'Ay, you don't like it—well, you shall have something worse for your pains.' Thus his Lordship, poor fellow, by taking the wrong view, went on from bad to worse, and at every struggle with the public sunk deeper and deeper in their esteem, while he himself became more and more sensitive about their disapprobation. 'Many, many a pleasant hour I have spent with him,' Sir Walter added, 'and I never met a man with nobler feelings, or one who, had he not unfortunately taken the wrong course, might have done more to make himself beloved and respected. A man of eminence in any line, and perhaps a man of great literary eminence especially, is exposed to a thousand eyes which men, not so celebrated, are safe from—and in consequence, right conduct is much more essential to his happiness than to those who are less watched; and I may add, that only by such conduct can the permanence of his real influence over

* 'The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us.'—*King Lear.*

any class be secured. I could not persuade Byron to see it in this light—the more's the pity, for he has had no justice done him.'

"Some one talked of the pains taken to provide the poor with receipts for making good dishes out of their ordinary messes. 'I dislike all such interference,' he said,—'all your domiciliary, kind, impertinent visits—they are all pretty much felt like insults, and do no manner of good; let people go on in their own way, in God's name. How would you like to have a nobleman coming to you to teach you how to dish up your beefsteak into a French kickshaw? And who is there so miserably put to his ways and means that will endure to have another coming to teach him how to economize and keep his accounts? Let the poor alone in their domestic habits, I pray you; protect them and treat them kindly, of course, and trust them; but let them enjoy in quiet their dish of porridge, and their potatoes and herrings, or whatever it may be—but for any sake don't torment them with your fashionable soups. And take care,' he added, 'not to give them any thing gratis; except when they are under the gripe of immediate *misery*—what *they* think misery—consider it as a sin to do any thing that can tend to make them lose the precious feelings of independence. For my part, I very, very rarely give any thing away. Now, for instance, this pile of branches which has been thinned out this morning, is placed here for sale for the poor people's fires, and I am perfectly certain they are more grateful to me for selling it at the price I do (which, you may be sure, is no great matter), than if I were to give them ten times the quantity for nothing. Every shilling collected in this and other similar manners, goes to a fund which pays the doctor for his attendance on them when they are sick; and this is my notion of charity.'

"I shall have given a false impression of this great man's character to those who do not know him, if I have left an impression that he is all goodness and forbearance —that there is no acid in his character; for I have heard him several times as sharp as need be when there was occasion. To-day, for instance, when a recent trial, in which a beautiful actress was concerned, happened to be brought into discussion, he gave his opinion of all the parties with great force and spirit; and when the lady's father's name was mentioned as having connived at his daughter's disgrace, he exclaimed, 'Well, I do not know what I would not give to have one good kick at that infernal rascal—I would give it to him,' said he, drawing his chair back a foot from the table, 'I would give it to him in such style as should send the vagabond out of that window as far as the Tweed. Only, God forgive me,' added he, smiling at his own unwonted impetuosity, and drawing his chair forward quietly to the table, 'only it would be too good a death for the villain; and besides,' said he, his good-humoured manner returning as he spoke, 'it would be a sad pollution to our bonny Tweed to have the drowning of such a thoroughbred miscreant as could sell his daughter's honour!'

"It is interesting to see how all ranks agree to respect our hero, and to treat him with respect at once, and with kindness and familiarity. On high days and holidays a large blue ensign, such as is worn by ships of war, is displayed at a flag-staff, rising from a round tower built for the purpose at one angle of his garden. The history of this flag is as follows:—

"The 'Old Shipping Smack Company' of Leith, some time ago launched one of the finest vessels they had ever sailed, and called her 'The Walter Scott,' in

honour of their countryman. In return for this compliment he made the Captain a present of a set of flags; which flags you may be sure the noble commander was not shy of displaying to all the world. Now, it so happens that there is a strict order, forbidding all vessels, except King's ships, to hoist any other flag than a red ensign, so that when our gallant smack-skipper chanced to fall in with one of his Majesty's cruizers, he was ordered peremptorily to pull down his blue colours. This was so sore a humiliation, that he refused to obey, and conceiving that he could out-sail the frigate, crowded all sail, and tried to make off with his ensign still flying at his mast-head. The ship-of-war, however, was not to be so satisfied, and hinted as much by dropping a cannon-shot across his fore-foot. Down came the blue ensign, which was accordingly made prize of, and transmitted forthwith to the Lords of the Admiralty, as is usual in such cases of contumely. Their Lordships, in merry mood, and perhaps even in the plenitude of their power, feeling the respect which was due to genius, sent the flag to Abbotsford, and wrote an official letter to Sir Walter, stating the case, and requesting him to have the goodness to give orders to his cruizers in future not to hoist colours appropriated exclusively to the ships of his Majesty. The transaction was creditable to all parties, and he, instead of taking offence,* as a blockhead in his place would have done, immediately sent for his masons, and built him a tower on which to erect his flag—and the first occasion on which it was displayed was the late return of his eldest son from England. . . . . .

* I do not understand how any man could have taken offence under these circumstances. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Melville, and the Secretary, Mr Croker, were both intimate friends of Sir Walter's—and all that passed was of course matter of pleasantry.

"I have caught the fever of story-telling from contact with this Prince of all Story-tellers! During the riots for the immaculate Queen lately deceased, a report went abroad, it seems, that Abbotsford had been attacked by a mob, its windows broken, and the interior ransacked. 'Ay, ay,' said one of the neighbouring country people, to whom the story was told, 'so there was a great slaughter of people?' 'Na, na,' said his informant, 'there was naebody killed.'—'Weel, then,' said the other, 'depend upon it, it's aw a lee—if Abbotsford is taken by storm, and the Shirra in it, ye'll hae afterwards to tak account o' the killed and wounded, I'se warrant ye!'"

"Abbotsford, January 9.

"We saw nothing of the chief till luncheon-time, between one and two, and then only for a few minutes. He had gone out to breakfast, and on his return seemed busy with writing. At dinner he was in great force, and pleasant it was to observe the difference which his powers of conversation undergo by the change from a large to a small party. On Friday when we sat down twenty to dinner, it cost him an effort apparently to keep the ball up at table; but next day, when the company was reduced to his own family, with only two strangers (Fanny and I), he appeared delighted to be at home, and expanded with surprising animation, and poured forth his stores of knowledge and fun on all hands. I have never seen any person on more delightful terms with his family than he is. The best proof of this is the ease and confidence with which they all treat him, amounting quite to familiarity. Even the youngest of his nephews and nieces can joke with him, and seem at all times perfectly at ease in his presence—his coming into the room only increases the laugh, and never checks it—he either joins in

what is going on, or passes. No one notices him any more than if he were one of themselves. These are things which cannot be got up—no skill can put people at their ease where the disposition does not sincerely co-operate.

"Very probably he has so correct a knowledge of human character in all its varieties that he may assist by art in giving effect to this naturally kind bent of his disposition, and this he may do without ceasing to be perfectly natural. For instance, he never sits at any particular place at table—but takes his chance, and never goes, as a matter of course, to the top or to the bottom.* Perhaps this and other similar things are accidental, and done without reflection; but at all events, whether designed or not, their effect is to put every one as much at his ease as if a being of a superior order were not present.

"I know no one who takes more delight in the stories of others than he does, or who seems less desirous of occupying the ears of the company. It is true that no one topic can be touched upon, but straightway there flows out a current of appropriate story—and let the anecdote which any one else tells be ever so humorous, its only effect is to elicit from him another, or rather a dozen others, still more in point. Yet, as I am trying to describe this singular man to others who have not seen him, I should be leaving a wrong impression of his style in this respect, were I to omit mentioning that there is nothing in the least like triumph on these occasions, or any apparent wish to excel the last speaker—the new key is struck, as it were, and instantly the instrument discourses most eloquent music—but the thing is done as

* This seems refining. Sir Walter, like any other gentleman of his standing, might be expected to devolve the labour of carving on one of his sons.

if he could not help it; and how often is his story suggested by the obvious desire to get the man that has been speaking out of a scrape, either with some of the hearers, or perhaps with his own conscience. 'Are you a sportsman?' he asked me to-day. I said I was not—that I had begun too late in life, and that I did not find shooting in particular at all amusing. 'Well, neither do I,' he observed; 'time has been when I did shoot a good deal, but somehow I never very much liked it. I was never quite at ease when I had knocked down my black-cock, and going to pick him up, he cast back his dying eye with a look of reproach. I don't affect to be more squeamish than my neighbours,—but I am not ashamed to say, that no practice ever reconciled me fully to the cruelty of the affair. At all events, now that I can do as I like without fear of ridicule, I take more pleasure in seeing the birds fly past me unharmed. I don't carry this nicety, however, beyond my own person—as Walter there will take good occasion to testify to-morrow.'

"Apparently fearing that he had become a little too sentimental, he speedily diverted our thoughts by telling us of a friend of his, Mr Hastings Sands, who went out to shoot for the first time, and after firing away for a whole morning without any success, at length brought down a bird close to the house, and ran up to catch his pheasant, as he supposed—but which, to his horror, he found was a pet parrot, belonging to one of the young ladies. It was flapping its painted plumage, now all dripping with blood—and ejaculating quickly, Pretty Poll! pretty Poll! as it expired at the feet of the luckless sportsman—who, between shame and regret, swore that, as it was his first experiment in shooting, it should be his last; and on the spot broke his gun all to pieces, and could never afterwards bear to hear a shot fired.

"But I am forgetting what I hinted at as a very characteristic turn of his good-nature. I had mentioned among other reasons why I was not very fond of shooting, that when I missed I was mortified at my want of skill, and that when I saw the bird lying dead at my feet it recalled to my mind a boyish piece of cruelty which I had been guilty of some five-and-twenty or thirty years ago, the recollection of which has been a source of frequent and bitter remorse. It is almost too bad to relate—suffice it that the nest was robbed, the young ones drowned before the mother's eyes, and then she was killed. 'You take it too deeply now,' he said, 'and yet an early circumstance of that kind properly reflected upon is calculated to have the best effect on our character throughout life. I too,' he continued, 'have my story of boyish cruelty, which has often given me the bitterest remorse in my after life; but which I think has carried with it its useful lesson in practice. I saw a dog coming towards me, when I was a boy about the age you describe yourself to have been when you murdered the ox-eye family. What devil tempted me I know not, but I took up a large stone, threw it, and hit the dog. Nevertheless, it had still strength to crawl up to me, and lick my feet kindly, though its leg was broken—it was a poor bitch big with pup.'

"From parrots we got to *corbies*, or ravens, and he told us with infinite humour a story of a certain tame bird of this description, whose constant delight was to do mischief, and to plague all mankind and beastkind. 'A stranger' (he said) 'called one day with a very surly dog, whose habit it was to snarl and bite at every animal save man; and he was consequently the terror and hatred of his own fraternity, and of the whole race of cats, sheep, poultry, and so on. "Maitre Corbeau"

seemed to discover the character of the stranger, and from the moment of his arrival determined to play him a trick. I watched him all the while, as I saw clearly that he had a *month's mind* for some mischief. He first hopped up familiarly to Cato, as if to say, "How d'ye do?" Cato snapped and growled like a bear. Corbie retired with a flutter, saying, "God bless me, what's the matter? I had no idea, my good sir, that I was offending you—I scarcely saw you, I was looking for a worm." By and by he made another studied sort of approach—and when Cato growled he drew off, with an air as if he said, "What the devil is the matter with *you?*—I'm not meddling with you—let *me* alone." Presently the dog became less and less suspicious of Mr Corbie, and composed himself on the sunny gravel-walk in a fine sleep. Corbie watched his moment, and hopped and hopped quietly till close up, and then leaping on Cato's back, flapped his wings violently, gave one or two severe dabs with his bill, and then flew up to the edge of the cornice over the gateway, and laughed and screamed with joy at the impotent fury of the dog—a human being could not have laughed more naturally—and no man that ever existed could have enjoyed a mischievous joke more completely than our friend Corbie.' . . . . .

"10th January, 1825.

"The party at Abbotsford breaks up this morning, to the sorrow, I believe, of every member of it. The loadstar of our attraction, accompanied by his sister-in-law, Mrs Thomas Scott, and her family, set off for Lord Dalhousie's—and all the others, except Lady Scott and her daughter, who are to follow in a day or two, are streaming off in different directions. Sir Walter seemed as unwilling to leave the country, and return to the bustle of the city, as any schoolboy could have been to go back to

his lessons after the holidays. No man perhaps enjoys the country more than he does, and he is said to return to it always with the liveliest relish. It may be asked, if this be so, why he does not give up the town altogether? He might do so, and keep his Sheriffship; but his Clerkship is a thing of more consequence, and that he must lose; and what is far more important still, his constant transactions with the booksellers could never be carried on with convenience, were he permanently settled at a distance from them and their marts. His great purchases of land, his extensive plantations, the crowd of company which he entertains, and the splendid house he has just completed, are all severe pulls on his income —an income, it must be recollected, which is produced not from any fund, but by dint of labour, and from time to time. He is too prudent and sagacious a man not to live within his means; but as yet he cannot have laid by much, and he will have to write a good deal more before he can safely live where he pleases, and as he pleases.

"It becomes a curious question to know when it is that he actually writes these wonderful works which have fixed the attention of the world. Those who live with him, and see him always the idlest man of the company, are at a loss to discover when it is that he finds the means to compose his books. My attention was of course directed this way, and I confess I see no great difficulty about the matter. Even in the country here, where he comes professedly to be idle, I took notice that we never saw him till near ten o'clock in the morning, and, besides this, there were always some odd hours in the day in which he was not to be seen.

"We are apt to wonder at the prodigious quantity which he writes, and to imagine the labour must be commensurate. But, in point of fact, the quantity of

mere writing is not very great. It certainly is immense if the quality be taken into view; but if the mere amount of handwriting be considered it is by no means large. Any clerk in an office would transcribe one of the Waverley Novels, from beginning to end, in a week or ten days—say a fortnight. It is well known, or at least generally, and I have reason to believe truly admitted, that Sir Walter composes his works just as fast as he can write—that the manual labour is all that it costs him, for his thoughts flow spontaneously. He never corrects the press, or if he does so at all, it is very slightly—and in general his works come before the public just as they are written. Now, such being the case, I really have no difficulty in supposing that a couple of hours every day before breakfast may be quite sufficient for all the MS. of Waverley Novels produced in the busiest year since the commencement of the series.

"Since writing the above I have taken the trouble to make a computation, which I think fair to give, whichever way it may be thought to make in the argument.

"In each page of Kenilworth there are, upon an average, 864 letters: in each page of this Journal 777 letters. Now I find that in ten days I have written 120 pages, which would make about 108 pages of Kenilworth; and as there are 320 pages in a volume, it would, at my rate of writing this Journal, cost about 29½ days for each volume, or say three months for the composition of the whole of that work. No mortal in Abbotsford-house ever learned that I kept a Journal. I was in company all day and all the evening till a late hour—apparently the least occupied of the party; and I will venture to say not absent from the drawing-room one quarter of the time that the Unknown was. I was always down to breakfast before any one else, and often three quarters of an hour before the Author of Kenilworth—always among

the very last to go to bed—in short, I would have set the acutest observer at defiance to have discovered when I wrote this Journal—and yet it is written, honestly and fairly, day by day. I don't say it has cost me much labour; but it is surely not too much to suppose that its composition has cost me, an unpractised writer, as much study as Kenilworth has cost the glorious Unknown. I have not had the motive of L.5500 to spur me on for my set of volumes; but if I had had such a bribe, in addition to the feelings of good-will for those at home, for whose sole perusal I write this; and if I had had in view, over and above, the literary glory of contributing to the happiness of two-thirds of the globe, do you think I would not have written ten times as much, and yet no one should have been able to discover when it was that I had put pen to paper?

"All this assumes Sir Walter Scott to be *the man*. If at a distance there still exist any doubt on the question, there seems to be no longer any in Edinburgh. The whole tenor of Sir Walter's behaviour on the occasion shows him to be the writer; and the single argument of a man of his candour and literary taste never speaking of, or praising works such as these, would alone be sufficient. It would be totally irreconcilable with every part of his character to suppose that he would for an instant take the credit of another's work—and this *silence* is equivalent to the claim.

"It may then be settled that he is certainly the author—but some may ask, why then does he affect any mystery about it? This is easily answered—it saves him completely from a world of flattery and trouble, which he sincerely detests. He never reads the criticisms on his books: this I know from the most unquestionable authority. 'Praise,' he says, 'gives him no pleasure—and censure annoys him.' He is fully satisfied

to accept the intense avidity with which his novels are read—the enormous and continued sale of his works, as a sufficient commendation of them; and I can perfectly understand how the complete exemption from all idle flattery addressed to himself personally is a great blessing. Be it remembered that this favour would be bummed into his ears by every stupid wretch whom he met with, as well as by the polite and learned—he would be literally worried to death by praise, since not a blockhead would ever let him pass. As it is, he enjoys all the reputation he would have if his name were on the title-page, perhaps more; he enjoys all the profit—and he escapes all worry about the matter. There is, no doubt, some little bookselling trick in it too; but this is fair enough; his works are perhaps more talked of, and consequently more sold than if the author were avowed—but the real cause of the mystery undoubtedly is his love of quiet, which he can thus indulge without the loss of one grain of literary fame, or advantage of any description.

"To conclude—Sir Walter Scott really seems as great as a man as he is as an author; for he is altogether untouched by the applause of the whole civilized world. He is still as simple in his manners, as modest, unassuming, kind, and considerate in his behaviour to all persons, as he was when the world were unaware of his enormous powers. If any man can be said to have a right to be presumptuous in consequence of possessing acknowledged talents far above those of his company, he is this man. But what sagacity and intimate knowledge of human nature does it not display, when a man thus gifted, and thus entitled as it were to assume a higher level, undazzled by such unanimous praise, has steadiness of head enough not to be made giddy, and clearness enough of moral vision to discover that, so far from lessening the

admiration which it is admitted he might claim if he pleased, he augments it infinitely by seeming to wave that right altogether! How wisely he acts by mixing familiarly with all men, drawing them in crowds around him, placing them at their ease within a near view of his excellence, and taking his chance of being more correctly seen, more thoroughly known, and having his merits more heartily acknowledged, than if, with a hundred times even his abilities, he were to trumpet them forth to the world, and to frighten off spectators to a distance by the brazen sound!

"It is, no doubt, in a great measure, to this facility of access, and engaging manner, that his immense popularity is due; but I should hold it very unfair to suppose that he proceeds upon any such calculation. It is far more reasonable to conclude that Providence, in giving him such astonishing powers of pleasing others, should also have gifted him with a heart to understand and value the delight of being beloved as well as wondered at and admired; and we may suppose that he now enjoys a higher pleasure from seeing the happiness which he has given birth to both abroad in the world, and at home by his own fire-side, than any which his readers are conscious of. If a man does act well, it is an idle criticism to investigate the motive with any view of taking exception to that. Those motives which induce to good results, must, in the long run, be good also. A man may be wicked, and yet on a special occasion act virtuously, with a view to deceive and gain under false colours some advantage which his own flag denies him; but this will not do to go on with. Thus it signifies nothing to say that Sir Walter Scott, knowing the envious nature of the world, and the pleasure it has in decrying high merit, and picking holes in the reputation of great men, deports himself as he does, in order to avoid

the cavils of his inferiors. Where we find the success so great as in this case, we are quite safe in saying that it is not by rule and compass that the object is gained, but by genuine sentiment and right-mindedness—by the influence of those feelings which prompt men to take pleasure in good and kindly offices—by that judgment which sees through the mists of prejudice and error, finds *some* merit in every man, and makes allowances for the faults and weaknesses of all;—above all, by that admirable self-command which scarcely allows any unfavourable opinion to pass the lips,—the fruit of which is, that by concealing even from himself, as it were, every unkindly emotion, he ceases to feel it. His principle is, by every means, to banish from his mind all angry feelings of every description, and thus to exempt himself both from the pain of disappointment in disputes where he should fail, and from the pain of causing ill-will in cases where he might succeed. In this way he keeps on good terms with all his neighbours, without exception, and when others are disputing about boundaries and all the family of contiguous wrangling, he manages to be the universal friend. Instead of quarrelling with his eminent brother authors, whether poets or novelists (as so many others have done, and now do, to their mutual discomfort and shame), he is in friendly and thoroughly unenvious correspondence with them all. So far from any spark of jealousy being allowed to spring up, his delight is to discover and to foster, and make the most of genius wherever it exists. But the great trial is every-day life, and among every-day people: his house is filled with company all the year round, with persons of all ranks—from the highest down to the lowest class that is received at all in society; he is affable alike to them all, makes no effort at display on any occasion, is always gay and friendly, and puts every one at his ease;

I consider all else as a trifle compared with the entire simplicity of his manners, and the total apparent unconsciousness of the distinction which is his due. This, indeed, cannot possibly be assumed, but must be the result of the most entire modesty of heart, if I may use such an expression, the purest and most genuine kindness of disposition, which forbids his drawing any comparison to the disadvantage of others. He has been for many years the object of most acute and vigilant observation, and as far as my own opportunities have gone, I must agree with the general report—namely, that on no occasion has he ever betrayed the smallest symptom of vanity or affectation, or insinuated a thought bordering on presumption, or even on a consciousness of his own superiority in any respect whatsoever. Some of his oldest and most intimate friends assert, that he has even of late years become more simple and kindly than ever; that this attention to those about him, and absence of all apparent concern about himself go on, if possible, increasing with his fame and fortune. Surely if Sir Walter Scott be not a happy man, which he seems truly to be, he deserves to be so!"

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Thus terminates Captain Hall's Abbotsford Journal; and with his flourish of trumpets I must drop the curtain on a scene and period of unclouded prosperity and splendour. The muffled drum is in prospect.

END OF VOLUME FIFTH.

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